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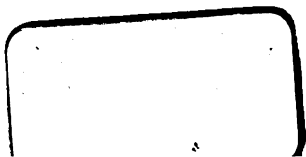
STONES OF ENGLAND:
WESTMINSTER ABBEY



WIMSETT BOULDING



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STONES OF ENGLAND.

Westminster Abbey.

BY

WIMSETT BOULDING,

AUTHOR OF

"Agnus Dei," "Mary Queen of Scots," "Goldenwood Lodge,"
&c., &c.



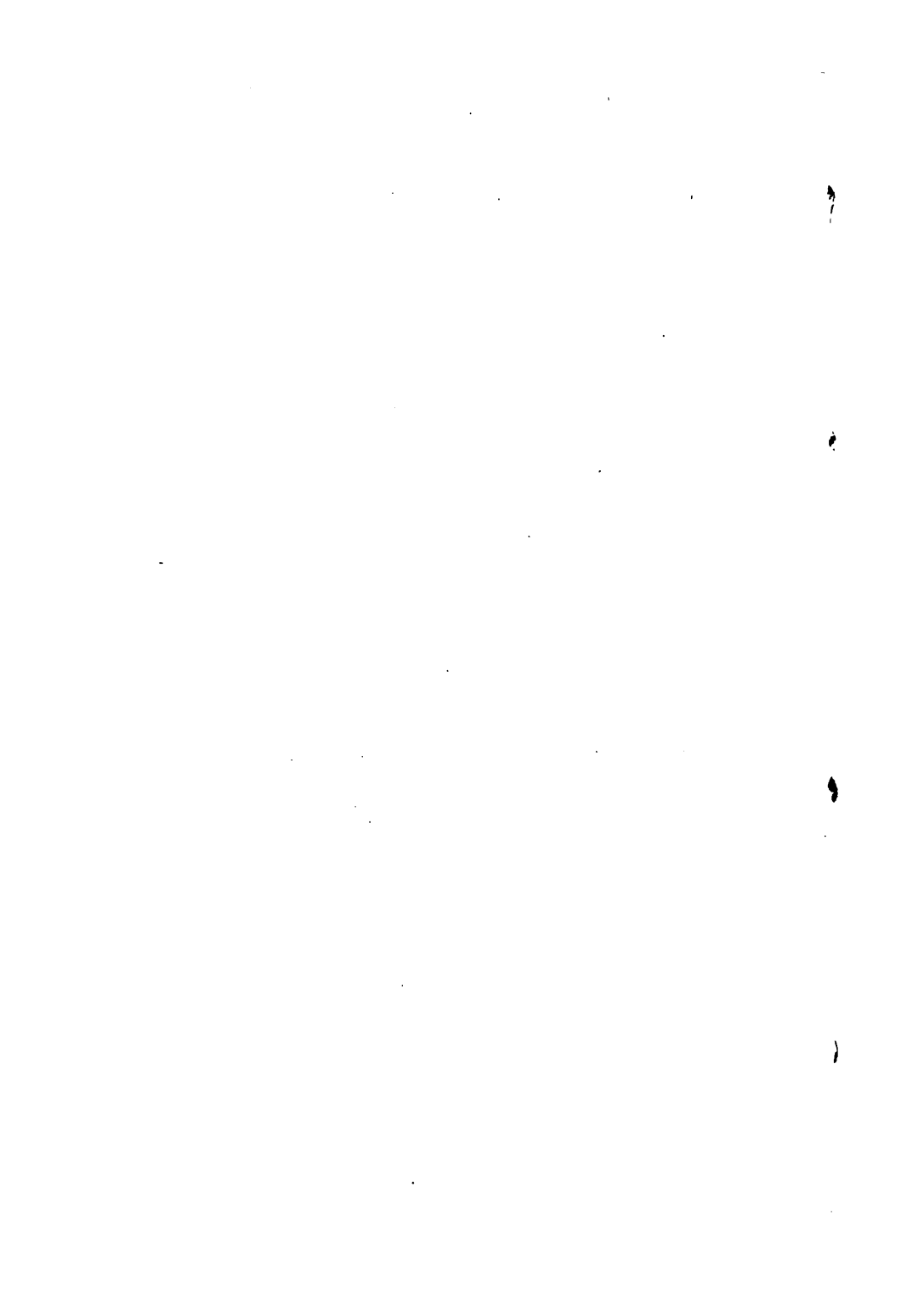
LONDON :

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AND DERBY.

—
1878.

280 . i . 582 .

TO
THE VERY REVEREND ARTHUR PENRHYN STANLEY, D.D.,
DEAN OF WESTMINSTER,
THIS POEM
IS DEDICATED,
BY HIS PERMISSION,
WITH GREAT ADMIRATION AND RESPECT.



Of Greece or Rome have I no heart to sing.
Thou wast my first love, and shalt be my last,
My country! All my days with thee have passed.
And should I strike my unaccustomed string
To other love, 'twould fail my touch, and bring
Shame on my Singer's Art. And since so vast
Thy greatness is, thy glory unsurpassed,
A wanton crime were such weak wandering.
Ungrateful seemeth it that English hands
Skilled in the lyre, should turn from thy dear face
To roam and sing on dead, deserted strands :
And while the Bards of old were fain to grace
Their Country's tale, the ashes of their lands
Should fire the Bards of the great English Race.

Say not those lands were worthier to be sung.
O Poet! do not thy grand sires this wrong
To whom alone Time granted to be strong.
From the great Singers all the splendour sprung
That hath immortalized their native tongue.
The fame of Troy lives but in Homer's Song,
Nor other title hath to live so long :
Round the old Bard gather the ages young
To listen to the warblings of his lyre :
Nor, save for these, would one tired wanderer stay.
Fair Helen's charms or proud Achilles' ire,
With all the glories of that famous fray,
Were tales too dull to cheer a Winter fire
Were they not strung on Poet's sparkling lay.

STONES OF ENGLAND:

WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

CANTO THE FIRST.

OLD Abbey, with a thousand Winters grey !
Throned midst tempestuous ages, while swift Time
Builds in thy clefts, and broods, and makes his stay ;
And his grey flocks, upon thy head sublime
Gathered and settled, fling their wild, weird chime
Into the sunlight of this gentler age.
Sure-footed Ruin toils in vain to climb
Thy age-worn walls, that have defied the rage
Of storms ; and stormier strifes than the fierce elements
wage.

Thou Likeness of the Ages, caught and carved !
Wherein each century, could it wake, might see
The features of its perished life preserved ;
And feel at home with its young progeny
In the still shade of thine antiquity.
How many Englands in thy stones survive !
How many Londons have gazed—pored—on thee,
Standing amidst these ages fugitive,
These generations that like vapours past thee drive ! 1

Strong with the strength of England's homely youth :
Fantastic with her ages of Romance :
Scarred with her hundred fights for life, for truth,
For King, for People : in thy countenance
Streaks as of patriots' tears : the temperance
Of saints, and cares of statesmen, mirrored, graven
Upon thy wan, worn walls : thy vast expanse
Furrowed with martyrs' agonies ; and paven
With countless hopes and prayers like stepping-stones to
Heaven.

I enter. Like a spell the historic gloom
Falls on me ; makes the world around appear
Distant and dim ; while monument and tomb
Pour out their shadows. Voices fill my ear.
The Present vanishes. The Past is here.
I gaze, move, breathe, as in a trance. I talk
With phantoms. Nought is real, substantial, clear,
But that which is not. Down the ghostly walk
I wander, while gigantic figures past me stalk—

The Kings and Heroes of the days of old ;
Ages long vanished reappear ; and, bright,
Their panoramic pageantries unfold,
Till the walls melt before my charmed sight,
And, in the midst of the transfiguring light,
My little life is spread and multiplied
Through all the changing Englands that unite
Their splendours in one orb'd life, descried
From this far space of years ; by distance glorified.

How ancient is the Place ! The very ray
Seems to have travelled from some far-off age,
'Tis so unlike the light of youthful day ;
As it had come on weary pilgrimage
To drop upon these shrines its tribute sage.
And well it may thus dim its shining face,
The Eternal Light's meek, sober-liveried page ;
For, in this changeless and world-banished space,
We touch Eternity. The Eternal fills the Place.

To Him 'twas dedicate : for Him it rose ;
Nor King nor Hero claims it for his own.
Beneath His shadowing wings they all repose,
But it was reared to His great name alone
Who sits upon His undivided throne.
They slumber calmly, each one in his bed ;
And round them shines the halo marked and known ;
But the vast Fane that stretches o'er their head
Is His, who Temples all—the living and the dead.

Who cometh yonder, borne with stately tread ¹
And solemn requiem, and deep hush of woe ?
A royal crown upon his kingly head, ²
His beard upon his bosom white as snow,
His cheeks like skies that hold the sunset-glow. ³
'Tis he—thy saintly Founder ! Shrine his dust
Deep in thy filial heart ! While ages grow,
Keep thou inviolate the precious trust ;
For blessed is the work and memory of the Just !

For when the Dedication-Day drew nigh,
And all his saintly hope was near its fruit ;
A mortal faintness seized him suddenly,
Stopped his glad feet in their divine pursuit,
And struck his ripening triumph at the root.
The work was crowned. But he nor saw nor knew :
His eyes were sealed in gloom, his voice was mute.
Like many a faithful servant of the True,
The harvest of his toils—'twas not for him to view.

Nor unmeet was that royal servant found ;
But waiting, with loins girt, and lamp well fed.
For lately while on pious errand bound,
Came an old man before him, begging bread ;
“ Alms, for the love of sweet St. John,” he said.
Gold had he none. But, like a generous knight,
The royal ring from off his hand he sped.
Did ever clerk a greater marvel write ?—
The beggar and the ring both vanished out of sight.

Two Pilgrims journeying in Holy Lands,
By night o'ertaken, wander from their road ;
When, lo ! a light shines round them. Midst it stands
An aged man, who asks of their abode.
They spake of King and Country. Whereat flowed
From his ripe lips love of their King more dear
Than man on man or monarch e'er bestowed ;
And then he brought them by a pathway near,
To a kind hostelry, and made for them good cheer.

He told them there he was the good St. John ;
Had been their monarch's friend, and still would be ;
Then gave them a large ring which he had on,
And sent it, saying, with sweet solemnity,
“ Six months, dear King, and thou shalt be with me.”
They sought their master, told these words and wept ;
Gave him the ring—their seal of probity.
He saw. He knew. A reverent silence kept.
Hastened his work ; and finished it ; thanked God, and
slept.

O blessed Tomb ! what, though thy royal clay
Rests 'neath the sanction of a cast-off creed ?
Creeds are the creatures of a mortal day,
Mere husks that hold and hide the living seed ;
They drop, and leave behind the immortal Deed.
Rest, blessed King ! Thy work was nobly done.
Some have been stronger for the time of need ;
And wiser some to read *all* times. But none
Excelled thee in the grace which makes the ages one.

What multitudes of scenes around me rise
As I gaze down these dim Time-haunted aisles !
Before me pass a thousand pageantries,
Pomp after pomp, in long and glittering files,
Until the vision sense and thought beguiles,
And in the passion and the pomp I share.
How real they seem ! The old time—how it smiles !
So seemed they to the actors. Oh, how fair !
Until they vanished ; as they vanish now—in air.

Here, where I stand, the Norman Conqueror stood,⁴
Flushed with new triumph, towering in his place.
Never again will wave on field or flood
The Royal banner of the Saxon's race.
Hide with the bloody rag yon Royal face !⁵
For, see ! The moon, searching the red-hilled sod,
There, where the rushing horror of disgrace
Death froze most deep, writes, like the hand of God,
With ghastly heightening, that dread word "Ichabod."

Yet not ingloriously the Saxon fell :
Foot to the enemy, and face to Heaven.
No proud invader could that spirit quell,⁷
Which, with the thunderbolts of war unriven,
By all the Norman chivalry undriven,
Riding the blast its conquering pæan sung.
Not less the enchanters with its power have striven ;
And down 'gainst thine their magic rods have flung,
Devourer of them all ! Thou Anglo-Saxon tongue !

What though the field of Hastings saw the doom
Of Saxon kingdom, and of Saxon line ?
A nation's laws and language none entomb,
Theirs is an essence spiritual, divine ;
And o'er an empire's grave they ever shine.
Greece reaches still her sceptre from the past :
This Roman empire never will decline :
And in the Earth's deep centre, world-wide, fast,
Thy Throne is fixed, thou monarch Saxon ! Best and Last !

With reverent steps approach this chair of oak,⁸
Indented deep by the sharp teeth of Time.
When o'er its leafy crown the tempests broke,
Rome may have been rejoicing in her prime.
And the rough stone beneath, from clime to clime⁹
Has travelled (legends of the ages say),
Anointed to this destiny sublime.
On it the dying saint, Columba lay,¹⁰
And far-off Scottish kings were lifted to their sway.¹¹

Deep in old Scotia's inmost heart that Stone,
A treasure priceless above gems, was shrined ;
Her rugged forefathers' more rugged throne ;
To all but its wild, native grandeur blind.
On it, as on their cheeks, the mountain wind
And rain and thunder had deep furrows graved ;
Symbolic of their grand old nation's mind,
Which has a thousand bloody battles braved :
But, though oft bruised and vanquished, never was enslaved.

Imagination ! Wonder-working seer !
Thou Promethean god with fire from heaven !
Thou new world-maker ! To a starry sphere
Raising the clod, such power to thee is given !
All-bright, all-potent, like the spirits seven
That from the sapphire Throne derive their birth—
Those Lamps whereby all things appear, light-riven.
'Neath thy descending feet heaven breaks from earth,
A rock becomes a Throne of world-transcending worth !

Here let it lie—born of old Scotland's rocks,¹²
And cradled in the heart of England's Oak.
Ye mighty twain conjoined can dare the shocks
Of the armed world, and triumph o'er the stroke ;
As when o'er these wild wave or whirlwind broke.
Or if the seal of Doom is on your brow,
And ye must yield to Fate's remorseless yoke ;
When o'er your Ruins Time shall drive his plough,
May your dust, mouldering, mix—as these do now.

What shapes are these that, rising like a mist,
Steal up the solemn nave with soundless tread ?
Proud knight, and haughty dame, and vested priest,
With swords upborne, and canopy outspread,
And trumpets blown, and prayers sung and said :
And one is lifted to this sacred seat,
And reverend fingers diadem his head,
And “ King ! ” a sea of voices round, him greet—
That sea of chivalry and beauty at his feet.

On, on they come, ascending mist on mist,
And host on host—an ever-varying stream ;—
Clouds shifting as the winds of Fashion list,
Confusion of all forms, and Change supreme,
Like the phantasmagoria of a dream :
King following King, and train succeeding train,
Like the bright armies of the evening's beam,
That spread their golden banners o'er the main,
Then heaped in pyres ignite, and leave in heaven no stain.

And one by one, into this chair uplifted,
They bear the crown, the sceptre and the ball ;
With various kingly powers and graces gifted,
To answer their expectant Country's call.
Some amply dowered ; some destitute of all.
So free is Heaven's eternal will, that knows
Respect of persons none ; but, liberal
To all mankind, its Sovereign greatness shows—
Smiles on the vale, and leaves the mountain to its snows.

So deals It with the monarch honoured first
To take this seat of Empire's glorious care,
King Edward's Son unkingly.¹³ But a burst
Of the old glory breaks into the air
As climbs the grandson¹⁴ to the vacant chair :
For yonder, the red morn, of battle won,
Peers through the clouds of Cressy ; and a pair
Of royal heroes through the vapours dun,
Rise glorious o'er the sea—brave sire, and braver son,¹⁵—

Son who, like Orb of Day with thunder dight,
(Alas ! prophetic of his noon's eclipse)¹⁶
Rode to the battle on his steed of night—
Night on his armour and his helm : and sleeps
In the Cathedral of fair Kent :¹⁷ while weeps
All England round his bier ; nor less to see
This chair profaned at length by him who steeps
His life in luxury and thoughtless glee ;
Unworthy of such sire—so bright a memory.¹⁸

And now, behold, the Rose of Lancaster¹⁹
Buds in the crime-cursed air and wrathful sun !
And droops, and drops into the sepulchre,
Killed with remorse ere half its day is done :
While from its Root springs forth a brilliant one,²⁰
From vice and folly suddenly upgrown
Into a kingly life ; so fair begun,
It fills already with its bloom the Throne,
And prophesies the Rose of Lancaster full-blown.²¹

And now the child,²² whose sad and sober eyes²³
Foretell the speedy withering of that Flower,
Which, sown in blood, and reared 'neath stormy skies,
Bloomed strong and bright beneath the embattled tower,
But droops in the sweet calm of saintly bower.
With pious tears who can those red lips cool
Which thirst for Battle's bloody thunder-shower ?
It dies upon that breast, with piteous dool,
In which it finds fair gifts, but not its gift of Rule.

And now the York Rose²⁴ mounts to kiss the sun,
All unashamed to wear a breast so white.
O, will ye not, pure Heavens ! that bosom shun,
Which, not content with battle's honest might,
Must add the assassin's dagger to its right ?²⁵
But see, what awful figure rises there !
Look at him, Edward ! Ah ! 'twould blast thy sight
If thou *couldst* look ! He stabbed thy Rival's heir ;²⁶
And yonder smothers thine—thy sleeping, princely pair ;²⁷

And thine alone, of all the royal race,²⁸
Goes to his grave unseptr'd and uncrowned :²⁹
The banquet is preparing ;³⁰ and apace
The hour draws nigh when on this hallowed ground
He takes upon his brow the golden round.
Ah ! never will that brow encircled be !
In a vile hole, without or stone or mound,
He sleeps. Wake, Edward, from thy tomb, and see !
The murderer ! Who ? He wears thy crown ! Richard ?
'Tis he.³¹

But, hark ! The thunders roll on Bosworth's plain ;³²
The trumpets peal ; the knightly banners wave :
No longer wail, ye spirits of the slain !
It is the avenger comes ! On, on, ye brave ;
Root deep your standard in the Innocents' grave !
Their souls fight with you, urging on the blast,
And through the darkened heavens for Judgment crave.
Ah, see ! they gather round the usurper fast : [last !
The bright blade leaps. 'Tis in his heart ! He gasps !—his

Hail, Richmond ! King !³³ The trumps of victory
Proclaim thy title, and the cannon's boom
Thunders thy challenge to the applauding sky.³⁴
Take from his head, ye warriors, take his plume,³⁵
And set the crown of England in its room,
While bright, invisible hands the unction pour ;³⁶
His canopy the Battle's purple gloom.³⁷
Here sanctify the oath which there ye swore ;—³⁸
The verdict and the ceremonial of war.

Now blooms the Rose of England. White and Red
Mingle their beauty in one Princely Flower.³⁹
Fair grew their wedded stems, and yonder shed
Their mingling honours where strife hath no power.⁴⁰
Shine forth, bright Sun, and gild this happy hour !
Sound, trumpets ! Thunder, cannon ! Roll, ye drums !
Ye streets, array yourselves like summer bower !
Thou reverend Abbey, see ! thy gloom succumbs
In galaxies of splendour ! For, he comes ! he comes ! —

The hope of England ! Crowned with all her loves.
Worshipped by all her daughters. By her sons
Extolled. See how the flocks of fluttering doves
Their fair, fond necks outstretch, while valiant ones,
Deep-ranked, stand glittering in this sun of suns !
A youth of nerve and muscle, heart and brain.
Tremble thou, France, ! And all ye myrmidons
Of the Seven Hills, shake for your sceptres twain ;
Nor dare dispute with him his doubtless right to reign.

Another scene. The years, how fast they flee !
Another Edward,⁴¹ and another child ;
The tender scion of the giant tree :
On whose sweet lips a dying mother smiled,
And for his sake with death was reconciled.⁴²
Vain reconciliation ! In his face
I see a light too pure for skies defiled.
'Tis the reflection of Heaven's fair embrace ;
The kiss with which she steals the sweetest of our race.

Lo, he is gone ! Ill-spared and deeply wept.
But roll along, thou pageant ! Shift thy show !
Into his grave funereal glooms be swept,
The world stops not, though men or monarchs go ;
All can be spared. It is man's fate below.
Rise up, thou Queen,⁴³ and take his seat—*thy* seat ;
Open the Temple to thy father's Foe ;
Bid the advancing centuries retreat ;
Set Spain on high, and fling thine England at her feet.⁴⁴

But no, proud Spain ! A country's dear-bought right
Shall not be bartered for a heartless smile ;
Not for a woman's love or wedded plight
Shall the world backward roll, and this fair isle
Pluck down her trophied honours, pile on pile
Heaped by a hundred battle-fields, and graves
Of countless martyrs ; with subservience vile,
To strew them at the feet of foreign knaves.
The woman thou hast vanquished. But there stay thy waves.

For, see ! A mightier hand is on thy Bride ;⁴⁵
His hand, to whom thy legions are as air :
Who stalks into the palace undenied,
Though Cæsar and his majesty be there.
His single dart what armed host may dare ?
Here lies thy victim, Philip—the royal thing
Thou mad'st not even thy toy, much less thy care
Drop we a pitying tear for her ; but fling
Our challenge at thy feet, thou would-be England's King.

Behold who yonder comes ! her soul on fire,
 To purge her country from the Spaniard's slime ;
 The mightier daughter of a mighty sire,
 From out the furnace of the seething time
 Starting, like armed Minerva in her prime.
 Crown her, thou England ! Bow the subject knee !
 Spread wide thy joy from clashing chime to chime !
 • Awaken all thine ancient chivalry !
 Perish the heart, fair Queen, that looks unmoved on thee !⁴⁶

For as I gaze, the vision of the seer
 Comes on me. From her throne, as from a sun,
 A glory grows, until the hemisphere
 Burns with unwonted day, and many an one
 Comes from afar, as erst to Solomon
 The Ethiop Queen, to see her majesty
 Whom some admire, all envy, none dare shun ;
 Empress "from Orcades to Pyrene,"⁴⁷
 Queen of the Isles, and Sovereign Mistress of the sea.

And round her Throne a starry splendour rolls,
 That turns the cheek of envious Athens pale ;
 A host of brilliant minds and mighty souls,
 Whose wit and valour in the historic tale,
 Shall all the ages of the world regale.
 Of her I hear melodious Spenser sing ;⁴⁸
 And Shakespeare marks her, from sweet Avon's vale,⁴⁹
 Throned in the west ; and hears the silver string
 Of Cupid's bow, and hails her, Virgin conquering !

And stern and brave, in corslet of bright steel
And snow-white plume, she rides before her host.⁵⁰
Now, haughty Philip, now her greatness feel :
Thy huge wings hovering, flapping round our coast
Shall drop in impotence, like thy vain boast.
See how her fire-ships hiss along the main !
And, hark ! the whirlwinds to the battle post !
The foe—they fly before the hurricane !
Heaven fights for us ! Behold thy wrecks, insulting Spain !

Now break the long procession :—all too slow
To bring the dearer scene for which we crave.
Nations, like oceans, have their ebb and flow :
And these long years are but the reflux wave
That breaketh now, thy royal feet to lave,
Victoria, our Queen—our last and best !
All our departed glories, from the grave
In thee revive, with heightened charms exprest,
Of Queenhood, Wifehood, Motherhood the Crown confest.

Bright rose the day, and every eye was bright :⁵¹
High climbed the sun, and every heart rose high :
Through the brief watches of that balmy night
A sleepless city searched the Eastern sky
To catch the signal of the morning nigh.
Now the day breaks. Now broadens into flame ;
And the sun mounts in summer majesty :
While thunder-throated cannons' loud acclaim⁵²
Salutes the royal city in her Sovereign's name.

And, hark! the rising of the mighty sea
So dear to Right, to Tyranny so dread:
The thunder of that stern democracy
About the Throne in stormy might outspread—
The sovereign people round its sovereign Head.
See how it swells! Wave rolling after wave,
Pouring through street, and lane, and alley; fed
From their live veins, and heart profound and brave,
Whose loftiest pride it were to find a patriot's grave.

And towards that fragile form and gentle face
They press and surge with joy that knows no bound:
Hark to the shouts! as, with a stately pace,
The brilliant cavalcade, midst trumpets' sound,
Bursts from the gates, and greets the thousands round.
Where on the earth exists a sight so fair?
Where break such crops of homage from the ground?
To yield such worship none but freemen dare.
Heaven never hears such shouts except in English air.

Onward she comes between those solid walls
Of billowing people that, like Egypt's sea,
All self-controlled, toss but with joy. Deep calls
To deep, in storms that make but jubilee,
And, rolling backwards, leave her progress free.
On to thy crown, fair nation-guarded head!
A million breasts stand shields 'twixt harm and thee;
Should it but breathe—the winds the alarm would spread,
And our deep ocean cleave for thee its jewelled bed.

Ye enemies of loyalty, and foes
Of Freedom and of England—(such ye are !)
Who spread your sail to every wind that blows,
And fondly deem yourselves the Morning Star
Of the new Time which patriots saw from far :
Base mongrels from the crowd, who 'fore it sprawl
And kiss its miry feet, as never Czar
Or Cæsar saw his vilest sycophant crawl ;
Ye would-be statesmen who can only bang and bawl

In windy squares, and dream the ragged mob
Represents England, and its swagger and noise
The voice of this great People, and the throb
Of its brave heart ;—ye conscienceless decoys
Of Demon Anarchy, who with her toys
Of “ liberties ” entices but to plunder ;
Ye who would turn our palaces to styes—
Styes for yourselves to grub in ! See, and wonder !
Then fly ! like frightened beasts before the bursting thunder.

And now she pauses at the ancient gate
With clasped hands, bowed head, and down-dropt eyes,
A flower of eighteen summers, 'neath the weight,
Untried, of England's world-wide destinies.
That lowly posture—how it beautifies !
And now she enters. And anon, midst roll
Of drums ; and trumpets ; and ten thousand eyes,
Glistening with tears, through which the o'er-joyed soul
Flings countless rainbows round her for an aureole

She comes ! A thousand years of glory on her ;
The Pride of England midst her England's prime ;
To claim the power her kingly sires have won her
In field and council in the olden time,
By many a minstrel sung in lofty rhyme.
Saxon, and Norman, and Plantagenet,
Tudor, and Stuart, and Brunswick ;—Maid sublime !
In whose blue veins, polluted never yet,
Hearts of a hundred Kings, like kindred streams, have met.

Thou Priest, anoint her with the holy oil ;
Thou Knight, present to her the golden spurs ;
The Sword, the Dove, the Orb, the Sceptre Royal,
The Ring, the golden Mantle—all are hers !
Uplift her to the Throne, ye Ministers.⁸³
Ye sacred fingers, on her brow serene
Adjust the Crown. Now all the Abbey stirs ;
And loud and long, with trumpets' peal between,
And cannons' roar, the shout rolls round, " God save the
Queen ! "

But, hark ! the clock ! The visions all have sped.
At the first stroke they vanished like a sprite
When the cock crows, and in the East the red
Of life flushes the pale dead cheek of Night.
Nor dropped a plume in his precipitate flight
The startled Past, smit by the iron hand
Of the all-powerful Present. On my sight,
Like meteoric showers, his visions grand
Expired. Again amidst the common world I stand.

CANTO THE SECOND.

TREAD softly ! for thy feet are on the dead !
Call back thy far-flown Fancy ! Look around !
Alas ! beside thee lies the crown'd head ;
Lies here—lies low—in dust—here—where 'twas crown'd.
This is the end of your vast glittering round,
Ye stars, that with your trains fired all the sky,
Whose royal splendours did the world confound.
Not one poor spark remains to testify
What this cold stone must tell, that here your ashes lie :—

Burnt out—all burnt ! No torch can re-illumine
This heap of dust that once was man and King.
Pause ere thou mount thy Throne. Enter this tomb,
Proud monarch. See its great dust mouldering.
Methinks thy crown looks not so bright a thing !
See'st not the worm that hides within its rim ?
His pomp has vanished : thine is vanishing.
Does not the gold appear a little dim ?
Say ! can'st thou King it proudly whilst thou look'st on
him ?

Alas ! alas ! of Kings and Kingly shows
But these are left—a crumbling stone and chair !
Here as I stood, methought their Shades arose
And came to throne the royal Preacher there—
Successors to his labour and despair.¹
Hark ! how the accents thrill the ghostly gloom,
While the dead monarchs stand with foreheads bare !
“ Death counts and seals each Pilgrim from the womb,
And e’en the highest Throne is hollow with the tomb.”

’Tis good that Kings should see themselves, who oft
See their forms only, in the flatterer’s face :
Good they should visit these whose backs have doffed
The royal robe, and mark the vile grimace
Death’s fingers on the Kingliest visage trace.
Are they less Kings who know themselves but men ?
Death humbles mortals, but does not disgrace ;
And he who is of Heaven a citizen,
A Throne cannot exalt, nor cast him down a den.

Happy the monarchs who could look on Death,
Yet o’er a living people still sit King !
Happy the people who could see beneath
Their feet dead Kings, yet not in anything
Display less reverence, or less tribute bring !
The palace stood by the sepulchral dome,²
Beside his hearth each King lay slumbering,³—
Domestic even in death ; so loth to roam,
E’en the grave wore the dear old English look of home.

Our fathers knew not fear. They built their Tomb
Beneath the shadow of their roof-tree lowly,
They dwelt at ease amidst the impending gloom,
Which bred in them a tender melancholy
In time of joy ; a brightness, stern and holy
In time of trouble. Subject, Monarch, both
In friendly intercourse with Death lived wholly :
To lover or to Land could plight their troth
In sight of their last bed—to lie there nothing loth.

Who can forget thy words, fair Eleanor,⁴
So simple, yet so fearless, true and grand ;
When fired with passion for the Holy War,
Thy gentle face turned towards the Christ-trod land,
Thou took'st in thine thy aged father's hand,⁵
To soothe his fears for thee ; his parting pain ?
“ As near a way to Heaven from Syria's strand,
As from dear England, or my native Spain,”
Then to thy heart didst whisper, “ Such a death were gain.”

Meet Bride for the true Knight who led thee forth
Across those weary wastes : tender as brave.
Alike in field and camp thy woman's worth,
His battle toils to share, his wounds to lave,⁶
He proved. Meet seeker of that Blessed Grave
Where women, love-armed, watched : the last and first
To the dead Christ who love's sweet sadness gave :
Saw the dim sun set on the Day Accurst ;
And saw his third-day glories o'er the mountains burst.

But strange it seems of those old times to think.
One scarcely can believe it the same world.
If *thou* couldst wake and see it, thou wouldst shrink
From its cold touch—no holy Flag unfurled !
The molten wave across the nations hurled
Has passed ; and left no visible trace behind.
And yet this Age, that, like a cold snake curled
Upon a sunny bank, seems but to find
Its life in close-coiled selfishness, knotted and twined

In fold on fold of self ; by keener eyes
Is seen in likeness of a Seraphim ;
Its burning scales the armour of the skies,
Mailing in light each brave, puissant limb.
A complex, many-natured Cherubim.
Its stillness, the hid fire's intenser glow,
To which that bright volcanic burst was dim,
Which poured its lava-stream in one vast flow,
And left in its red path a Continent of snow.

Religion shares its planet's natural life ;
And mounts with manhood to its tranquil Source ;
Now 'tis all passion, fire, tempestuous strife,
Earthquake and storm, and world-upheaving force ;
Creations monstrous ; works uncouth and coarse.
And now it glides into the golden time
Of sunny smile, and gentle intercourse ;
The tranquil strength of powers in their prime,
Clear thought, and well-directed aim, and work sublime.

But rest, thou fair Crusader, sweetly rest !
Thy faith and knowledge were enough for thee.
Cross thy dear hands upon thy gentle breast ;
And in the embalmment of thy piety
Sleep, sweetly sleep, until the end shall be.
The growing world has left thee far behind ;
But truth, zeal, goodness are one family :
And underneath the ages, intertwined,
Their tendrils meet—shoots from the same great Parent
Mind.

Brave hearts ! How many of you slumber here !
Ye knew the terrors of the bloody fight—
Sword, shaft, bolt, battle-axe—knew all, but fear
And the wild horror of inglorious flight.
Witness, thou Tomb of Edward, Royal Knight !
And thine, great Warrior of Cressy's field !⁸
And thou deep-dented helm that didst " affright
The air " at Agincourt, and blazoned shield "
'Gainst which the battle's rattling thunder vainly pealed !

Well ye remember that tremendous day
When vaunting France, impatient for the blow,
Assembled her magnificent array.
And England, from the height, wasted and low,
Watched through the boisterous night the audacious foe
Foretasting all the morrow's victory ;
In the full moon,¹⁰ and by the watch-fire's glow
Spurring with song the lame hours limping by ;
And laughing with proud scorn upon the battle nigh.¹¹

The sun rose up, a ball of fire blood-red :
Blood-red the hurrying clouds, torn by the blast,
Flung out their tattered banners, while they fled
On the shrill-piping winds ; and as they passed
A blood-red glow on shield and helmet cast,
Breastplate, and waving plume and glittering lance ;
As if the gory deluge coming fast
From England's purple veins o'er that expanse,
Had cast its crimson shadow on the hosts of France.

See their proud banners, how they scourge the gale,
And glisten in the sun—a golden fire !
Their shadows dancing on the flashing mail
Of mounted prince, and noble, knight and squire—
Thirsting for deeds of arms and vengeance dire.
“ Now, now, ye English, ye shall rue the day
Ye set your foot in France ! Deep in the mire
Where now ye sink, ye shall be trod to clay,
And yonder sun shall set on England's perished sway ! ” ¹²

Nay, boast not ! Few we be, thinned by disease,
And want and weariness have chilled our blood :
But our brave sires have breasted stormier seas—
Poitiers and Cressy ; and rolled back the flood,
Rank after rank—broken to surf and scud
Upon their hearts of flint, their brows of brass !
Shall not the sons stand where the fathers stood ?
Lo, we defy your dense and thunderous mass !
We break ourselves, or it ! We perish, or we pass !

And with a shout that scared the stormy sky
They dashed upon the foe—that dauntless few :
On like a whirlwind rushed his cavalry :
From their stout bows a thousand arrows flew,
And horse and rider reeled, shot through and through :
They reeled, they fell, in heaps they strewed the plain ;
And still they fell, and still those hillocks grew,
Till each red reaper on his mount of slain
Towered high ; half-buried in the sheaves of quivering
grain.¹³

And who is he that with brave words and deeds
Inspires the valour of that fearless band ?
Where'er he bids them go their ranks he leads ;
A Kingly pattern to a King's command :¹⁴
Braving the fierce Alençon's ponderous brand,¹⁵
That cleaves his jewelled casque with fissures deep :
It is thy Mad-Cap's, Falstaff—that brave hand !
Thou didst not dream in taverns at Eastcheap,
That such a hero's pulse within its veins did sleep.

Judge not of men, ye prophets, in their youth :
Their brawls are oft eruptions of a fire
Which time, and tears, and Evil's bitter truth
Will teach to its pure Fountain to aspire,
And make them burning seraphim entire.
Hither and thither, comet-like, they run,
Affrighting earth and heaven with dances dire,
Till their fierce impulses, o'erpowered by one
Strong will—behold ! they horse the Chariot of the Sun !

Judge nothing ere the time. The day that's born
With thunder-throes, and swathed with whirlwind-cloud,
May sleep, a cherub, in the arms of morn ;
And at the prime, bright-breasted, golden-browed,
Shine like Apollo. And in purple shroud,
Azure and gold and crimson, fall asleep ;
While the sky chariots, in gorgeous crowd,
Follow his bier adown the Western steep,
And with funereal torches Heaven fires all the deep.

So may it be with men. With him 'twas so.
No Prince of Wales did so besmirch his plume,
Or nullify its motto, yet outgrow
Himself so fully, or so fast. The tomb
Received him in his manhood's opening bloom :
Yet State ne'er mourned its head with truer tears
Than England wept for his untimely doom,¹⁶
Who on his Throne had falsified her fears ;
Sovereign and Warrior, renowned above his years.

She bore him to his grave in kingly state ;
On towering car his effigy of gold,¹⁷
Shining midst blaze of torches, through the gate,
Into the Abbey's solemn dimness rolled :
Midst priestly dirge and wail, and knell deep-knolled :
Saddle, and helm, and shield aloft displayed,
Emblazoning his deeds of battle bold :
While close behind his war-steeds pranced, and neighed
To see the place where their victorious lord was laid.⁸

Rest in thy glory, Prince ! 'Twas men like thee
Who made our Country great. What, though the aim
Of thy victorious zeal and valour, we
Who live in times of higher thought disclaim ?
Thou saw'st with thine own light, and who shall blame
The heart that followed where the conscience led ?
To each true man accord his meed of fame.
" Was it for duty that ye fought and bled ?
Come, sit ye down with us," cry all the Immortal Dead.

I envy not the heart that, grown so cold,
Its pride of home and country sunk so low,
Can gaze unmoved upon these warriors old,
Who made this fair and feeble island grow
On her sea-shield, a Gorgon to the foe !
Hence, sordid wretch ! Thou hast nor lot nor claim
In England's glory ! To the hucksters go !
Hide thee with sots—thy country's curse and shame ;
Nor dare to link with thine her bright, Immortal Name !

England, awake ! The nations of the earth
Have taunted thee with weakness and decay !
" She hath of gold enow, but woeful dearth
Of mighty manhood," thy detractors say,
" For men of mighty heart renowned alway."
Here, at the altars of your ancient State,
Ye children, kneel ; re-light the fires to-day,
That kept your fathers' land inviolate,
And made it, for a thousand years, the greatest of the great.

War is a grievous and a bitter woe—
Cities laid waste and harvests reaped with sword :
'Tis worse to feel a nation's pulse beat low,
In frivolous and effeminate ease. O Lord
Of battles ! sooner let thy vials be poured,
Than that the sons should waste in wanton mirth
The strength their sires for great adventure stored ;
And the time-hoarded glories of such worth
Squander in vanities that shame their noble birth.

It shall not be. No ; by the sacred dead
That call us, charge, command us from their biers !
These walls would break in thunder o'er our head,
Each aged stone pour down a rain of tears,
To such high summons did we close our ears !
It shall not be. Ye have not preached for nought,
Immortals, from your grand sepulchral tiers !
Here stand we for the Land for which ye fought
Till memory has fled and love and life's last thought.

Nought claims our reverence here but solid worth.
Kings lie around me—kings whose word was law ;
Whose face was as the sun, while all the earth
Chilled in their frown. Their presence does not awe
Nor dazzle me. Who that their glory saw
Could have imagined them brought down to this ?
The lowest wretch that shivers on his straw
Would now disdain their hand, their cheek to kiss :
And e'en dust-eating serpents at such dust would hiss.

Men speak of you, ye Kings, without restraint :
They call you scholar, blockhead, sage, or fool,
Tyrant or benefactor, devil or saint :
They judge you by the universal rule ;
And spare nor blame, nor scorn, nor ridicule.
Your blood is nought. Thus is your right defined
By men of every rank, and creed, and school ;
Had he a generous, lofty, royal mind ?
Then crown him with the lasting reverence of mankind.

But was he murderer, tyrant, profligate ?
Filled he his court with harlots ? Did he drain
The purses of the poor by lawless rate
And tax extortionate ? Dipped he to Spain¹⁹
Our grand old flag ? Making the very main
To blush, cooled he the Spaniard's bloody thirst,
Quenching our bravest heart our brightest brain
Upon the scaffold ?²⁰ At a deed so curst
The patriot dead are moved, and the world's thunders burst.

It should be so. Why should we reverence Kings
Who revered not themselves ? Why honour them
Who broke all Honour's laws ? Stern Justice flings
Their title in their face whose diadem,
Bedight with every splendour, lacked that gem
Called Virtue. Here no lower claim is left.
The World arraigns thee, King ! Must it condemn ?
Look'st for thy Crown ? Charge against Death that theft.
Hast thou no other royalty ? Thou *art* bereft !

How far across the Darkness of the World
The rays of Virtue strike, shot from a Throne !
Its lightnings vanished with the bolts they hurled ;
But this calm radiance shineth sweetly on,
Charming and blessing all it beams upon !
So, Edward,²¹ shines thy fame. Men cannot stamp
The stars out ; nor Time thee. For thou hast won
Thy seat 'mongst souls ensphered. The Grave's cold damp
Cannot extinguish o'er our Throne thy heaven-lit lamp.

So sing I of all virtuous souls and deeds.
Not mine the odious task to lift the veil
That Death hath dropped on doubtful lives. Heaven reads
The secret History of the Past. Its scale
Is just. Let this suffice us. Man is frail ;
Judges are men. Oh ! not to erring me
Belongs it the defenceless dead to assail :
To little purpose would my musings be
In this great Pile, failed I to learn its charity.

'Tis graven on its walls. It soars aloft
In every arch ; blooms in each sculptured flower ;
Time on each clustered column breathes it soft
From whispering aisle to aisle, from base to tower ;
Gathering upon the lips, in silent power,
Of praying effigy and pleading form ;
While from the Skeleton's many-chambered bower
Echo the hundred homilies in one storm—
Death's multiplied Amen to these tongues multi-form.

How eloquently Heaven proclaims its law,²²
In the calm silence of each slumberer's bed !
Here, Wanderer, pause. Listen with reverent awe
To the great message of the peaceful dead.
Here sleep they, calmly pillowed, head by head,
Foes for whose feuds the world found narrow room ;
Now, side by side, their mingling dust is shed,
Children again in earth's maternal womb,
Locked in the last, long, deep communion of the Tomb.

Perchance (who knows ?) when Night's live shadows creep
O'er grave and monument, and dead-dark aisle ;
And mortals, gathered to the folds of sleep,
Vex not the melancholy, brooding Pile,
The dead flit through the vaulted gloom, and while
The night away in converse great and high,
Reviewing the dead Past. Must they not smile
To see the end of all their enmity ?
Alas, that this to learn, mortals perforce must die !

In charity with all, our lives begin ;
A flower of Love, we nourish the sweet Root
We grew on ; and from many a blighting sin
Guard, with our helpless arms, the golden fruit
Of wedded Love ; and waken Love's fair shoot
In loveless hearts—touched by our trembling tear ;
And the first note that quivers from the lute
Of our young soul Love breathes in mother's ear ;
Thus float we into Life in Love's fair atmosphere :

And pass into the dark Domain of Hate ;
Where Human Wills God's ordinance depart,
And Wrath, and Pride, and Envy subjugate
The sweet Necessity of our young heart.
Happy if Infancy's unconscious part
We act, with manhood's strong fulfilling mind,
Ere stern Necessity uplifts its dart,
And, bound by the great Power we cannot bind,
We sleep in helpless charity with all mankind.

Hither I stray when rankles in my soul
The hate of rivals ; scorn of enemies ;
And some long-sought, and brightly-beaming goal
Fades into mist before my tear-blind eyes,
While in my heart tempestuous passions rise
I sit me down. I hear Time's garrulous stream
Flow past, babbling of feuds and jealousies
Lost in the flood. I shame that such a dream
Should move me. Passion dies ; and Reason reigns
supreme.

What are the rivalries of meaner hearts
Compared with yours, ye mighty Ones, who rest
Beneath this Tomb ?³³ Only a coffin parts
Your ashes twain. Here like an honoured guest,
The great oppressor welcomed the oppressed
Who, all-forgiving, sought her sheltering arms
From the fierce storms of Empire. On the breast
Of Katharine's daughter sleep the Boleyn's charms
And the long agony of jealousy's alarms.

So sleep in peace, fair sisters ! On your head—
Both royal, both crowned—rests not the bitter wrong
That made you foes. Its victims living, dead
Ye haste to heal the burning sore, so long
Your Country's curse, and yours. Who shall prolong
What ye have ended in so blest a bond ?
Fain would I blend your memory in my song,
As blends your dust ; and, in communion fond,
Your souls, united, blend in the bright world beyond.

But O thou mighty and magnificent Queen !
Thou royallest of Women ! whose brave heart
Moved true as dial to thy Country ; keen
Thine eye as flame, sharper than lightning's dart
In foreign faces smoothed with sycophant's art ;
Whose every drop of blood was English, fed
From those Kent hills that saw their Flower depart,
And knew, whate'er might hap, the King would wed
A true born English heart and crown an English head.

Thou Builder of thy England's tottering throne !
Confirmer of her Freedom newly-won !
Consolidator of her Faith !—the stone
In passion flung, by Wisdom building on
And sovereign Principle, till that was done
Thy sire dreamt not ; and, like true knight, this State
Set forth on her career the Champion
Of Liberty, the world to emancipate
From Dragon worse than that whose combat bards relate.

Thy praises have been sung in nobler lays
To nobler lyres. I am a minstrel born
Out of due time, and fallen upon days
That care not for the minstrel's song. Forlorn
He strays whom Kings caressed and praised, the scorn
Of every wealthy fool and prospering knave.
Yet strange, sad solace for my song outworn
Find I in singing at thy lonely grave
To ears that cannot hear, and heart that cannot save.

Yes, thou art gone ; and gone are all the bards
That made thee mirth, and glorified thy reign.
They could not charm old Death. Nor all thy guards
Arrest his progress. By this Tomb how vain
Seems all the glory of this world. What gain
Are crowns and kingdoms, save for space they make
For wider, further-reaching service ? Strain
Thy sight, man, until all the world thou take !
Here thy horizon is : the prospect here must break.

I see thee, Queen ! upon thy Progresses ;
All England greeting thee along thy way ;
Castles and halls and towers and fortresses
Saluting thee ; proud Earls and Ladies gay ;
And Kenilworth's old Towers keep holiday
• To do thee honour, make thee royal cheer.
I look, and all is gone. Thou lorn as they
Round whose dark ruins owls and bats career ;
Thy worshippers all vanished, thou left lonely here.

'Tis the old tale, that men have heard since first
The dirge wailed "Dust to Dust." But the words fall
Like drowsy murmurings, save when some wild burst
Of the old flood affrights them with its brawl
O'er wide-spread Desolation. But that call
Is not more real than Nature's ceaseless sigh.
Vain life, if these frail fading shows were all !
But these are only husks that drop and die
And "bring to light" the fruit of Immortality.

Ha ! what strange fate has brought *thee* here, thou Scot ?²⁴
In life the terror, and in death the shame
Of this our royallest Queen ! Was it to blot
Her glory ? Or to affront her with thy claim
Even from the Tomb ? Or rouse perpetual blame
In English bosoms that thy headless corse
Was summoned from its bloody grave ?²⁵ thy name
Set among England's sovereigns ?²⁶ Not by Force
Can Royal fame be purged, or stirred a Land's Remorse.

'Tis by persuasion only—the appeal
Of a just cause, unexpiated Crime
Against the innocent, that nations feel
The late repentance which exhumes dead Time
For wagging heads and flouts—the scorn sublime
Of a proud race with noble shame inspired.
No royal mandate can awake the chime
That breaks from peoples by true passion fired ;
Such music, like Heaven's own, is not coerced or hired.

Go, thou vain monarch ! Publish thy decree
To the shrill winds ! Bid them their clarions blow !
Or make thy proclamation to the sea
To rouse its organ thunders ; or to flow
In sweetly soothing cadence soft and low !
Or bid the songsters of the field and sky
Shake out their music at thy will ! They know
Nor that nor thee. So hearts constraint defy ;
For it they cannot sing—they can but break and die.

Fair Stuart ! Of thy Beauty all have heard ;
Thy smile that slew men's hearts, and lofty mien ;
All with thy griefs and sufferings have been stirred ;
And the tremendous hour that closed the scene
When on the scaffold thou stoodst up—a Queen !
Such are thy charms—so potent, so divine—
Only stretch forth thy hand, and swear “ ’Tis clean ! ”
We need no royal mandate : we are thine !
Behold a weeping nation prostrate at thy shrine !

Beauty ! Divine Enchantress ! Heavenly Bride !
Daughter of God ! Eternal is thy sway !
All-trampling Death on his pale Horse may ride
Over thy Palace ; on thy Roses gay
Blow with his withering breath ; in ruins lay
Thine alabaster walls ; and summon all
His noxious train to feast on thy decay ;
Through all thy rubied galleries worms may crawl,
And foul Corruption revel in thy purple hall : —

And fouler Reptiles trail on thee their slime ;
And filthier Worms devour thy goodly name.
And blacker Death that lives in *certain* crime
Dismantle the fair Temple of thy Fame ;
And bare thy rotten putrid heart of shame !
But still the nameless Something, that once gave
Thy soul its power, like an immortal flame
Consumes both Deaths, and makes all Time thy slave,
To weep and worship, Fancy-fettered, o'er thy grave !

Lo ! the sun breaking from the morning cloud
Streams through the window on thy sepulchre.
It lights not thee nor warms thee in thy shroud,
Poor hapless Queen ! that hast no comforter,
Nor lover ; no, not even a flatterer,—
Left so forlorn. I would this beam might steal
Down to thy lonely bed, that it might stir
The pulsing of thy bright, brave heart, unseal
Thine eyes, and all their starry depths of love reveal.

But no. 'Twill never light thy glossy hair,
Paint thy soft cheeks again. Thy beauty now
Is but a tale—a dream. O thou wast fair !
Too fair for Guilt's false snakes t' entwist thy brow.
Pardon the thought ! Lo ! here I disavow
The ignoble doubt. Beam on her, sun and star,
By day and night, and bless her ! And hear thou
In the still shades where the departed are—
Dear Sleeper ! hear me sing and dream 'tis Chatelar.

Methinks thou wouldst have shuddered had the thought
Struck on thy dreams, Elizabeth ! that she
Would rest not, e'en in death, till she had sought
Thy last abode—feeling the way to thee
With poor, blind hands, heart-full of misery,
And at the fearful touch, down-dropping prone.
“ Ha ! Hast thou found me, O mine enemy ? ”
I hear thee cry ! And through the long nights lone
Ye wait, Companions awful ! the great Judgment Throne.

But lo ! hard by a gem of purer ray ! *
A jewel quarried from the heavenly mines
Whence angels deck the diadems they lay
At the Immortal feet of Him who shines
Above the brightest bright,—a gem that shrines
By Beauty carved for her terrene abode
Ne'er glowed withal,—a glory that refines
Unshapely clay till e'en earth's common sod
Becomes a heavenly jewel of great price to God.

Thine was that Beauty, saintly Margaret !
With meek and quiet spirit, sweetly dight.
Through misty years we see it sparkling yet,
An incorruptible immortal light.
Here Beauty come ! and feast thy widowed sight
With that worms cannot prey on. Then go hence
To spin thy tissues with a web more bright
Than flesh and blood ; and on the warp of sense
Weave dyes that burn its darkness out with light intense.

Amidst the gorgeous Dames that round each Queen
Death's solemn court attend, no greater name
Duchess! than thine.²⁸ But the long years between
Had razed thee from remembrance had thy fame
Stood only in thy doubly royal claim.
But of thy womb the sweetest flower was born
That England's sun e'er saw. O wrong! O shame!
Its saintly innocence cast out forlorn,
Trampled in mire and blood one dreary winter's morn.

Here thou reposest in a royal grave
In honour and in pomp. But what of her?
Didst thou not think of her flung like a slave
Into a common pit? Poor prisoner!
No bed to die on, and no sepulchre
To rest in! And a child! Woman, *thy* child!
Alas! thou knewest not the grace of her!
But she sleeps well: in glory undefiled
That these proud marbles could not give above her piled.

Heaven knows what part in the great wrong was thine;
'Twas none of hers. No lamb of sacrifice
Grew up more spotless; or upon God's shrine
Fell comelier than when she paid the price
For Traitors—her's, her country's. Foul device
Prepared for one so young, so innocent!
Feet that had ne'er been out of Paradise
Caught in a saint-like snare! Blameless consent
To a great crime, that makes her greater monument!

Sleep on, proud Duchess ! Neither love nor hate
Feel we for thee ! Thou art but one of those—
Dame Fortune's insignificantly great—
Lit with a Coronet that only shows
Thy native dimness more. 'Tis *it* that glows
Across Time's waste, not thou. But on Tower Green
Shines that which from its grave with traitors throws
Lustre upon thy marble, that no Queen
Rays forth in all this gorgeous monumental scene.

O ye dear nation-honoured sepulchres !
Fain would I linger and recite the deeds
Of other your great dead, their characters
Emblazon in my song. But whoso reads
His country's grand old story happily needs
No home-spun verse of mine to embalm their worth
Which in its own pure brightness far exceeds
The circumambient splendour of their birth,
And sets them in the firmament for lights on earth.

The throngs that wake me from my reveries,
The throngs of sight-seers as they come and go,
I watch, as here I muse ; and in their eyes
I angle for their souls. Dull, sluggish, slow
Heaves this one ; that one makes a sheeny show
Of shallow interest. One is grave and grey,
Another gay and gaping ; and the glow
Of the bright, living ocean of to-day
On this one plays, as proud he stands, then goes his way.

And this one moves me most ; for dulness springs
From Ignorance, and shallowness from lack
Of Nature's bounty ; but the Pride that flings
Its scorn on these dead days, and turns its back
On all their hopes, and fears, and cares—the wreck
Of hearts once warm and true and brave ; this makes
My spirit boil within me, and ‘O slack
Of Gratitude !’ I cry, for their dear sakes,
‘Thus is it proud man of his sires’ blood, brain partakes ?’

Doth man's advance consist in greater light ?
Or little greatly used ? Are we more wise
Because we know more ? Truer because our sight
Of Truth is clearer ? Nearer to the skies
Since more familiar with their mysteries ?
Or braver, because science has explored
Brief, bloodier roads to Conquest ? He who tries
To think aright, be true in deed and word,
Despite dark Age, cramped Creed, stands nearest to the Lord.

And doubtless ye shall stand approved of Christ,
Who reared this Temple from your treasures royal.
Men scoff at you, who have not sacrificed
For their enlightened plans like gold or toil :
So on their niggard heads their scoffs recoil.
How easy 'tis to censure zeal's excess !
How hard to reach the height of conscience loyal !
'Tis better surely to do more than less,
And squander gold in *stones* than die in sordidness.

Ah ! Superstition is a lightsome shaft,
And fitteth any fool or coxcomb's bow !
But these trim archers are a feeble craft ;
Their shafts fly, like their aspirations, low.
They dream not to what heavenly height may grow
E'en superstition, in an earnest breast :
Nor can their boasted " light and knowledge " show
A work more useful, glorious or blest
Than this, that crowned your life, and consecrates your rest.

They were not shallow men who digged so deep :
Nor weak who builded so substantially :
Nor grovelling, who with so sublime a sweep
Spread these grand arches—reared them up so high :
Nor vulgar who so delicate tracery
With fairy fingers wrought in stubborn stone.
Could they who builded for Eternity,
In higher work their principles disown,—
Immortal Architects for Earth and Time alone ?

Our fathers' dwellings less luxurious were ;
Scanty their furniture, and hard their bed ;
Instead of carpets, rushes ; and the air
Claimed right of ingress ; and beneath their head
A log for pillow served ; their rude board spread
With coarsest food, while on their masters' nod
Servants, with dogs, stood waiting for their bread.
Enlightened *we* embellish our abode
With all that in their ignorance they gave to God.

Nor know we what men gave, gave up, to build
In olden time their marvellous sanctuaries.
With poor men's hoards the treasury was filled,
And trinkets, dear in wife and daughters' eyes,
Were laid upon the altar—sacrifice.
These temples stand, the embodied faith and love
Of simple souls gone home to Paradise.
Who calls them fools, his better light should prove
By equal gifts, in nobler forms, to Him above.

And this—adorned like Bride for Heavenly Spouse—
Henry Plantagenet³⁹—this gift was thine !
And as King Solomon made his cedared House
Excel good David's tent, thou mad'st this shine
Above the good Confessor's, whose dear shrine
Thou didst bring up, and in the midst set high,
As Solomon brought up the Ark Divine,
With ceremonial and with minstrelsy ;
By thee and thine upborne in sweet humility.⁴⁰

And fired by kindred zeal, thou didst complete
His sumptuous offering in this chapel fair,⁴¹
With every grace of form and fancy sweet,
In life thy passion, and in death thy care,
Henry of Richmond ! as if springing there
Stone had grown up and flowered at thy command,
Solid as marble hewn, light, free as air,
Pricked into blossom by an angel's hand :
Worship made visible, all Time by praises spanned.

Rest 'neath their double shade, ye Builders three !
Saxon, Plantagenet, and Tudor, rest !
More glorious than all your pedigree ;
Brighter than all the jewels in your crest,
In England's eyes, shines this sublime bequest.
Dewed with perpetual blessings be your grave.
The storms of ages o'er your peaceful breast
Break in soft music—rolling up the nave
Anthem on anthem, psalm on psalm, till Time's last wave.

But Darkness covers monument and tomb :
Along the aisles the last few footsteps die.
Yon lofty blazoned panes are black. The gloom
Feels like the shadow of Death. The monarchs lie
So still I almost fear to pass them by.
The silence grows so deep, it soon, methinks,
O'er-pressed must breathe and die. That effigy !
Did it not move ? Yon armour—hark ! it chinks !
Dread Presence ! at thy touch my flesh, like Jacob's, shrinks.

CANTO THE THIRD.

I who, in part, thy royal glories traced,
Illustrious Abbey ! turn me now to explore
Thy humbler dust, by no such glories graced ;
Yet in its lack, methinks, shining the more.
Of this rich England see the native ore !
Pearls of our Island Seas ! All ashes now.
What splendour slumbers 'neath this vaulted floor !
The far-seen lustre, England, on thy brow—
Here lie the stars that made it. Ask thine annals how !

The many workers at thy loom, who spun
Thy divers-coloured History, thou Land
Of many thoughts and interests woven in one
Tissue of golden Freedom—patterned, planned
By slowly-shaping Knowledge, that Demand
Answers by asking fitness—making fit.
Statesman, Historian, Hero, Bard—each hand
That flung the time-worn shuttle, and with it
Some thread of golden Thought, or Speech, or Deed that
knit

The Fabric stronger ; or its woof more fine :
Or wrought with subtler skill, or purer taste ;
Or the King's daughter beautified to shine
Brighter in sight of God and nations ;—graced
With honours, here they lie, by Kings embraced.
Yet wherefore speak of this vain world's degrees ?
Men who have nobler laws and methods traced ;
New blood through shrunken nations poured ; decrees
Flung forth in songs that bowed the world ! Say, what
are these ?

What though they boast no royal lineage ;
Though some were born in poverty's dark cell,
With care and sorrow for their heritage,
And the cold world's neglect or scorn, and fell
By want and weariness, that could not quell
Their nobler part—escaping to the spheres !
From the Eternal Mansions where they dwell
I see them sweep—illustrious Charioteers !—
And ride in sovereign triumph on the rolling years.

Chiefs of the Earth ; Kings of its Thought and Deed,
Down the dark waste I mark their fiery track :
Their living wheels the wings of Time outspeed ;
Through earth-bred mists, like lightnings through the rack,
Burning their path ; and on the Future black
Kindling the dawn of a more glorious day.
Blazing like suns along the zodiac,
I mark their ever-onward, widening way,
Till all the sphere is filled with their celestial sway.

What though they live no more to sense and sight ?
What though the tomb e'en hides their cold remains ?
Spirits are of the nature of the light,
Which for a season sun or star contains ;
But, when Heaven shakes to dust their awful trains,
With bodiless splendour still shall live and shine,
The sunless Day that Night no more restrains :
Like That of which it was the temporal, transient sign—
The Presence Universal and the Power Divine.

Forbid it, Heaven ! that grave, and dust, and bone,
And Silence, and Solemnity, and Gloom
Should so o'erpower my Fancy, and dethrone
My Reason, as to imprison me in the Tomb,
And make yon very Organ peal with Doom.
Such musings fit a Pagan mortuary,
But not a Temple every sculptured bloom
Upon whose arches irrepressibly
Seems bursting its stone lips with Immortality.¹

I tread on star-dust—orbs whose light unsphered
Rolls through the Universe in thoughts that live,
And deeds that grow, and Feeling's fire, endeared
As breath of God to Beings sensitive
To honour, goodness, genius—(fugitive
All other influence and power). But souls
Are suns to souls ; and the grand motion give
By which the world upon its axle rolls :
The exulting Dead ride on it, hastening to their goals.

Rail on, thou mocker ! Preach, thou moralist !
Cry through the desert of our blasted race,
“ All flesh is grass ! ” Yet mortals will resist
Your railings and your preachings, and still brace
Their strength e'en o'er the grave for Glory's chase.
'Tis the heart's native faith, ere reason born ;
Greater than all Denial, in the face
Of Death, with cherub-lips smiling in scorn,
Who wears its faded wreath, and feels alone the thorn.

They are not dead. They have but passed into
The light on which no earthly eye can gaze.
They live, and greatly live, though lost to view
And inaccessible, in the dread blaze
Wherein may live no soul of mortal days.
Their brightness who can guess ? In God's great light
They shine above the sun's meridian rays ;
In mental stature, and in moral might
Approaching to the Deity's approachless height.

And by that height their Glory must be weighed ;
Not by this handful of poor, sparkless dust.
Measure not manhood by the Sexton's spade !
Who judges the Volcano by its crust ?
Or the bright metal by its cloud of rust ?
“ Here,” cries the mocker, “ here your glory dies ! ”
But from above the Tomb there comes a gust
Of wondrous music, that proclaims he lies :
It is the choral burst of spirits in the skies !

All hail, ye men of wondrous mind and might !
When ye withdrew your radiance from our sky,
Into the eyeless sockets of the night
Gazing, we cried, " Can such bright splendours die ? "
We met the fool. In pained uncertainty
We cried, " Man is an animated clod ! "
But, lo ! we turned to you, our anchors high.
Our spirits spread their pinions, spurned the sod,
And soared away with trust unshaken up to God.

Who can remember thee, thou marvellous Mind,*
Whose effigy looks down upon me now—
Thou who, by Earth's dark barriers unconfined,
To Heaven's far deeps didst push thy venturous prow—
Sailing beneath the bridge of the Sun's bow,
Examining its glorious masonry ;
Thence on the starry torrents' fervid flow
Piercing the ancient Light's unvoyaged sea,
And deem this dark and narrow tomb holds all of Thee ?

Rather would I imagine, loosed from Earth,
And this impediment of cumbrous clay,
Thou watchest stars and systems leap to birth :
Or, like a sun-nymph in the Fount of Day
Plungest ; and, rising through the starry spray,
Speedest on wings of light, through depths of space,
Along the course of some vast, world-paved way,
Outstripping the young planets in their race,
And grasping years of search in one sublime embrace.

As soon will I believe that sun and moon,
And all the glories of the midnight sky,
Whelmed in whose world-waves thought and fancy swoon,
Are but a vast mirage, suspended high
In the great desert of Immensity ;
And all their orbits, laws, and magnitude ;
And revolutions, seen by every eye ;
And Mathematics' truths, frail Fancy's brood,
As deem the Mind a phantom which their flights pursued.

O what grand flights may now be thine ! The steeds
Of the swift light halt in the race with Thought.
Thought is the spirit's wing that flesh impedes.
Flesh gone, the bondless spirit flies ; and nought
Can crush the freedom by its instincts taught ;
By aspirations cherished, culture trained ;
And thine—to such divine perfection wrought—
With one tremendous bound, methinks it gained
The utmost distance in thy visual sweep contained.

Yes, when I think of thee—thy clearness, strength,
Expansion, fulness—all thou wast 'mongst men,—
Thy spirit's height, and depth, and breadth, and length,
In this brief span of threescore years and ten
Attained ; midst limits of this mortal den :
Reason—that warder stern—disdains to bar
My Fancy's glimpse of thine advance since then
In the great House where many mansions are,
Its corridor the galaxy ; each room a star.

Methought I heard an angel strike his lyre !
The notes swelled through the listening sky, and hung
Like lightning on each chord of starry fire,
Kindling in every world an ear, a tongue,
And multiplying till the strain had rung
Through all the aisles and labyrinths of the spheres.
The heavenly sweetness to my spirit clung,
Until, o'erwhelmed, I wept. When lo ! appears
At God's feet sitting, all the universe in tears.

Lo, God is great ! we see Him not nor know.
Lo, God is Love ! we cannot comprehend.
His Being infinite doth round us flow,
A sweet Perfection without bound or end,
A Harmony that doth all thought transcend,
Whereof the worlds are but as strings and keys,
Touched by His finger that doth music send
So sweet we feel a Presence more than these,
And weep, o'erwhelmed in bliss as waves in boundless Seas.

O all creation is God's melody !
What Newton saw—the Planets' tuneful dance
Thou, Handel,³ heard'st, in heavenly harmony,
Absorbed in Music's soul-transporting trance
The myriad-voiced and visioned utterance
Of His Eternal Unity, Whose Rest
Is the Creation's end and Ordinance ;
Struggling through all her works and worlds in quest
Of His deep central peace, who is for ever blest—

"The Peace which passeth understanding all,"
Yet steals on souls attuned in golden times
Of thought and feeling—heavenly airs that fall,
With inward echoes, from the Eternal Climes ;
In the still night ; midst summer evening chimes ;
In the hushed woods ; or by the waveless sea ;
Or on the mountains when the spirit climbs
With the ascending feet, and stands, world-free,
Beneath the quivering star-dome of Eternity—

And gazes with mute lip, and solemn eye :
And thinks, perchance, or sight or sound may break
Here in Heaven's outer Court ; and tremblingly
Listens ; and feels the blood forsake the cheek,
And whispers, " Some unearthly voice did speak ! "
And half expects to see the gates unfold,
Celestial splendour fire each watchful peak,
Transforming all to diamond and gold,
And through the midst Heaven's twice ten thousand
 chariots rolled.

Unfathomed like Thy Power is Thy Repose ;
Yon masses whirled in silence through the abyss ;
The stedfast mountains born of Earthquakes' throes ;
The zephyrs that their giant foreheads kiss ;
Storms that around, fire-mouthed, like serpents hiss
In writhing clouds : thence to the sea rock-pent,
Their furies with the Hurricane's scourge dismiss ;—
To break her central stillness vainly spent—
All fail to express the Power or Peace Omnipotent !

Amidst the happy dance and peal of things,
We know not the deep harmony we see.
The mighty Instrument whose starry strings
Vibrate and quiver through Immensity,
Heedless we dwell amidst its melody.
But when its chords shall snap like tow asunder,
And, world with world entangled, heaven shall flee,
Amidst the roar of universal Thunder,
The Vanished Harmony shall fill the world with wonder.

The Seasons pipe before the marching years :
The vestal stars chant night-long through the skies :
Earth dances to the timbrels of the spheres :
The elements roll their deep antiphonies :
The atoms clasp with sweet affinities :
An orchestra is every common clod—
All echoes of the higher melodies
That break on heaven-tuned ears from star to sod—
The Universal Voice and Harmony of God !

Whose Being is all concord ; attribute
Blending with attribute, in union
Of sweetness inconceivable. Nor mute
The sterner powers, but so in unison
With gentleness their action is but one.
Blest Music ! stealing o'er this Sea of Strife,
Re-tuning jarring hearts—a world undone ;
Waft heavenward this poor earth, with discord rife,
And breathe in it the while thine own harmonious life.

And were not thine, great Player, heavenly airs ?
Warblings from brighter worlds ; strains floated hither
From the great Sea of Song, and unawares,
In silken cords, drawing us gently thither ;
Lulling the troubled waves like tranquil weather
Thou Sacred Syren, with world-rivalling force
To Heaven's Eternal Rock alluring, whither
No soul e'er passed to shipwreck : from the course
Of mad Delight, and the grim whirlpool of Remorse.

Thine was no carnal, lewd, voluptuous strain
Uttered to please an idle, sated ear :
And well I ween thou held'st in high disdain
The heartless, brainless crowd that would not hear
Thy marvellous song, caught from too fine a sphere
For their dull sense !⁴ Heaven's loftiest seraphim,
Should he in mortal's mean disguise appear,
Would tune to a deaf world his glorious hymn ;
How should it know an angel in those garments dim ?

Men ask for pleasure. Art lives not to please ;
To yield its powers in vulgar worldling's hire ;
To fan with seraph wing his sensual ease ;
To whet the parched lip of palled Desire ;
To bathe the limbs that Gold's fierce contests tire ;
Pleasing or paining, giving joy or grief,
It comes to wake the soul's immortal fire ;
To lend to its imprisoned sighs relief ;
To break the heart's cocoon and wing each numbed belief.

Who can an adequate encomium
Pronounce on thee, great Music ? Art Sublime !
Mind's Rapture ! A divine Delirium !
The soul of Mysticism, without its crime
'Gainst God and Reason ! In a boundless clime
Lost in far flights and reveries ; in vague wonder
And thought that wanders beyond space and time,
And bliss all unresolvable, that under
The distance faints that severs God and man asunder.

And thine was all inspired with lofty aim ;
Only less lofty, Handel, than its theme !
Prophet ;⁵ Deliverer ;⁶ and the greater Name
That fired the Prophet's passion, shaped his dream
The Word and Vision of the King Supreme !⁷
Was ever Melody so nobly wed ?
Did Music e'er its mission so redeem,
As when it breathed the tender words He said,⁸
Or faltered 'neath His Cross,⁹ or sobbed around Him
dead ?¹⁰

Or thundered with the Earthquake at His Tomb,
And through its caverns rolled the exulting chant,
" Thou didst not leave His soul in Hell, nor doom
His body to decay ; " and jubilant,
Swept like a storm before him ministrant,
Peal after peal, through all the bright ascent,¹¹
Till breaking on the pearly adamant,
The counter blast—a myriad peals long-pent—¹²
Burst its tempestuous heart,¹³ while the huge portals rent

Before the vast explosion, and He rode,
Amidst the fraternizing thunders, on their flames
Mingled and blended, through the blest abode—
The intertwining wings and loud acclaims
Of myriad ministers of glorious names
On fields of bright angelic battle won :
Who, as the voice from midst the Throne proclaims—
“ This day have I begotten thee, my Son,”¹⁴
Cry, “ All the Angels praise thee, Well-Beloved One !”¹⁵

Thou, Handel, heard'st them !—heard'st the thunders roll
All round the heavens ; and heard'st the Earth reply,
Listening from far, and quivering to her pole
With a prophetic joy ;—“ Thou art on high
Gone up, hast captive led captivity.”
Heard'st the word fall—a star shot from the Throne :¹⁶
Heard'st the loud stir of a great Company :¹⁷
Saw'st their bright feet on Salem's mountain zone ;¹⁸
And heard'st their sound go out to lands and tongues
unknown.¹⁹

And heard'st the raging of the heathen sea,²⁰
The chorus of its clamour, risen in wrath²¹
Against the Anointed. Heard'st it break and flee
Before His awful laugh,²²—Kings in His path
Dashed like a vessel which the potter hath
Broken in pieces.²³ Heard'st the anthem burst,²⁴
Sweeping from land to land,²⁵ above the froth
Of the spent billows of their malice curst ;
And spread, and deepen, till the world was all immersed

In floods of glory ; every wave a chime,
And every chime a Hallelujah—blown
From the four winds, and gathering sublime
In circling, swirling whirlpools round His Throne—
Whirlpools of song, world-traversing cyclōne
After cyclōne ; an endless army sweeping,
The passion and the power of every zone,
Like sea on sea their growing fulness heaping ;
Their voice of many waters ceaseless jubilee keeping.

The song is ended now—broken the lyre ;
Its strings corroding with the grave's foul rust :
Those showers of heaven-illuminating fire
Lighten no more ; their fountain, choked with dust,
Noxious with worms, earth hides it from disgust.
Pure Source ! where kindred spirits came to drink ;
And mighty Players did their harps adjust
By its high strains, and hand in hand did link
Their Naiad dance of worship, sporting round its brink.

Oh, never more its tuneful streams shall flow.
All Nature's spirits of sweet sound wept sore
To see their mighty Mouth-piece laid so low.
The Winds sighed deep and hollow. On the shore
The Sea lay moaning. Anguished Thunder tore
His robe of sackcloth ; and the Earthquake heaved
Her bosom pained ; while all in Heaven that soar
With shivering wings and quavering voices grieved
The World of Harmony had been so sore bereaved.

But through the wail and sob of Nature's grief
There stole a strain of wondrous melody.
The Tempest held its breath. Trembled each leaf
With apprehensive joy. A long, deep sigh
The Ocean heaved ; and in captivity
To the sweet music slept. The Thunder heard
With bliss too deep for utterance ; but the sky
Caught the reflection of its rapture, stirred
To lightnings' brilliant dance, by cloud or tear unblurred.

And Earthquake shut her dragon mouth and lay
In her red lair spell-bound ; and fount and rill
That shook and shivered in the dim-eyed day
As they crept, stumbling, down the tremulous hill,
Felt its heart steady, and a new joy thrill
Through every vein that rippled to their brim.
They knew the voice—the theme—the sacred skill.
Grief fainted in deep joy for Heaven and him :
The master of their choirs was crowned—a seraphim !

“ I know that my Redeemer liveth ! ” Hark !
The monumental marble bursts with song !²⁸
O'er the grave's silent chamber, deep and dark,
Hope's anthem²⁷ swells with History's Triumph strong,²⁸
And nave and aisle the mighty chant prolong,
Caught up and echoed in a peal so vast,²⁹
That old Death shakes his gloomy vaults among ;
While the dust stirs, as if it dreamt had passed
God's angel with his trumpet's world-awakening blast.³⁰

And didst thou sigh and yearn, poor broken heart !
From the lone ashes of thy life consumed,
For some enduring pen, with heavenly art,³¹
Upon the rocks of the wild waste that tombed
Thy wealth and children, and where darkly loomed
Phantoms of ill³² and Death his shade did rear ;³³
To grave thy words, that lonely pilgrims gloomed
With a like terror, haply wandering near
In search of shade, might read, and rise above their fear ?

Thou hast thy wish ! Lo ! graven on the rock
They stand—those words of thine—with pen of steel.
Nor in the wilderness where herd or flock
Alone the silence break ; but here, where peal
The city's thunders, and its thousands reel
Beneath their burdens, and with weary feet—
Wearier than desert-wanderer's—stray to kneel,
And cast their load. As from the mercy-seat
Those words their aching hearts with heavenly comfort
greet.

Nor here alone. But graven deeper still,
By more enduring pen, upon the scroll
Of the great minstrel with diviner skill ;
Round the vast world in endless waves to roll,
Deep as its woes, immortal as the soul.
And when these walls and pillars, bowed by Time,
Sinking in ruin, shall become a shoal³⁴
In a lone desert stream, the deathless chime,
New-winged from other lands, shall burst with hope
sublime

O'er broken pillar, mouldering arch and stone ;
O'er the blest man who gave that music birth ;
Over the tombs of kings and perished Throne ;
Over the dust of men of matchless worth ;
Over the brave old race that sowed the earth
With noble blood, and thoughts that spread like leaven—
Chimes o'er her dust from whose great soul went forth
The might that with the world's dark Powers has striven,
And the bright wave of Song that swept it nearer Heaven.

Here let me sit and dream. It is the spot²⁵
For rest and dreams—the Poets' shrine revered !
Midst these sepulchral grandeurs a fair grot
To pensive, meditative souls endeared.
The haunt of Fancy's progeny—creatures weird ;
Grand ; beauteous ; sublime ; fantastic ; wrought
By marvellous hands that Death nor felt, nor feared,
God-like, creating beings, worlds from nought
And Death himself entombing in immortal Thought.

Ye sleep midst your enchantments. Fairy wings
Flit round your pillow, canopy your head ;
Bright beings, born of your imaginings,
Drop kisses on your lips, bedew your bed
With tears and blessings, nor can think you dead
Who gave them life immortal. In your eyes,
Lifting each lid, they gaze ; and dream the red
Of morn the margin streaks of those dim skies ;
And clap their radiant wings with mingled songs and sighs ;

And weave their gentle charm, and breathe their spell ;
And call you by the woods, and fields and flowers ;
And whisper all the names ye loved so well—
The groves that sigh for you ; the wooing bowers ;
The Bird that watches through the lone night hours
For feet that never come, and pours her strain
To charm them forth :—and tell you when the showers
Part the buds' lips for you ; and when the grain
Waves to you from the fields ; but tell, and tell in vain.

Then they anoint your eyes with nectar, brought
From virgin flowers that bee has never sucked ;
And moisten your parched lips with dew-drops, caught
In cups of pearl from mermaids' caskets plucked ;
And the rose-cheeked, health-laden Winds conduct
To your lorn couch ; and Fairies of the sea
To bathe you with live foam, and to construct
Of reeds sweet pipes ; breathing on bended knee
Into your ears the soul that lives in Melody.

Earth weeps, and Heaven ; the Seasons ; Night and Day.
The beauteous Spirit of the Rainbow sits
On her lone arch, and weeps herself away
Because ye are not ; and each Zephyr flits
Round your forsaken haunts ; and, whirled by fits
Of moody grief upon the Tempest's breast
Falls dead : while the vexed Thunder splits
The hale old oak, jealous that aught should rest
On its green, shaded turf that your dear forms have pressed.

The mountain Spirits sigh through all their caves
For your lost steps, and to the stars complain
And white moon diamond-shod the glacier waves
Walking in uncheered splendour. Round the chain
Of the linked hills flies the electric pain ;
Peak after peak, with lamentations loud,
Breaks in convulsive thunders o'er the plain,
And, gathering round its face its robe of cloud,
Indignant, veils it from the blind, sight-seeking crowd.

The Spirits of the waters from the springs
That rise, moss-crowned ; or down the streams that glide
Where drink the wild deer, and the wood-bird sings ;
Or in the hollows of the ocean hide,
And down its shell-paved slopes and shallows slide,
Leap in its whirlpools, on its rainbows dance ;
Or in their shell-built fairy shallops ride
When the sea-horses toss their manes, and prance
Beneath the Tempest's lash, and Lightning's glittering
lance —

In the dim-lighted chambers of the rocks
They sit and mourn for you whose feet no more
Playfully trip amidst their gamboling flocks ;
Or move with measured beat along the shore,
Tuned to the breakers' melancholy roar.
How white their pale cheeks grew, when the sea-bells
Shook to the sound quivering along the floor
With mournful murmurs in its echoing shells
That told your race departing—prophesied their knells !

Nor less the wood nymphs wailed : (not less depended
Their lives upon your breath. Your beauty faded,
Your race extinct ; they fade, their course is ended.)
And where the forest sleeps most deeply shaded
They fled : and willow, yew, and cypress braided
Round their pale brows : from which their unbound hair
Streamed wildly down, o'er flowing robes brocaded
With all the flowering tints the forests wear ;
Now dim—the imagery wan of their despair.

And the bright Angel of the Sunset heard
The knell throb down her path of molten gold ;
And bade her fair attendants round her gird
Her robe of sackcloth ; who, as fold on fold
They wound the fabric dense, could not withhold
Their fingers from its fair embroidering—
All forms—all hues—signs of the manifold
Brilliance they mourned, and its emblazoning,—
Brilliance all quenched ; and its frail cloud-show vanishing.

How shall I comfort you, ethereal mourners ?
What balms or balsams to your wound apply ?
Weeping so sorely midst the crowd of scorers
On base pursuits and pleasures hastening by,
Caring not who may live, or who may die
While they may eat, and drink, and laugh and sleep.
Swine ! making heaven and earth a general sty
In their rich odours hues and sounds to steep
The languid powers—converting all to baseness deep.

Who see in God's strong, ministering bands
Nought but the slaves of luxury and desire :
Dare even to gyve the bright and burning hands
Of his pure seraphim that serve in Fire ;
Pressing them into Mammon's sordid hire ;
Making them Vulcans, grimed with dust and soot,
To forge the thunderbolts of battle dire ;
To sow the nations with the Dead Sea Fruit ;
And on the world's vast frame to print the Cloven Foot.

Who value the plump, rosy-bosomed clouds—
Those cherubs flying in the smile of God
With greetings from His lips, in countless crowds—
Crowds countless as His blessings—by the sod
Replenished—the few acres where they plod.
No eye for those fine forms ; that heaven-dyed trim ;
Blind save to ripening ear, and swelling pod.
Though Raphaels have been proud their grace to limn,
And o'er their garments spread march the great Cherubim.

To whom the Spirit that around the Globe
Has stretched his lightning girdle for a bond
Of Unity : through the world's seamless robe
Flashing like God's all-weaving shuttle ;—beyond
The marvels fabled of magician's wand ;
Making the vast circumference of this Ball
A whispering gallery ; giving Echo fond
A substance and a sway that would appal
Her timid ear and heart did they not so enthrall

Her being with the novelty and power
Of her life infinitely multiplied.
And wed to Science with so rich a dower
That all the lands enthrone her as their Pride
But to the vulgar herd this God-given Bride—
Fruitful of every good for heart and mind—
Knowledge, and peace, and charity world-wide,
To make one current life thrill all mankind—
Is but a beast of burden to mean tasks consigned.

Dull-eyed, dull-hearted race, to whom the Bard
Is but a dreamer ; an enchanted dome
Piling with crystal thought and jewelled word,
While the gaunt rafters of his naked home
Grin down on him, and its cold mocking foam
The world spits at him ; yet sits dreaming on,
Cold, hunger-eyed, care-wasted, nor will roan
From his blest toil, that what it sought has won,—
More of the Light that charmed when on him first it shone.

But they are dreamers—dreaming coins are wealth,
Possessions—goods, and joy—the world's caress ;
While on his spirit blooms ethereal health,
Nourished on angels' bread ; the comeliness
Of beings who material things possess
In higher combinations, all refined
In the pure fire of their unworldliness ;
Transformed to substance of immortal kind—
The incorporeal wealth and splendour of the mind.

For Nature is as beings are. To dust
And ashes dust and ashes. To the beast
A stall or sty. To Reptile-bodied Lust
Voluptuous forms. To appetite a Feast.
To Covetousness Hills of Gold. But to the least
To whom the vision of the Seer is given,
The Chancellor-Angel rising from the East
A bush God-fired. The Temple's veil light-riven.
A Ladder whose resplendent top is lost in Heaven.

What care they for your pomps who see such things ?
They ask no gilded equipage who ride
In the cloud-chariots with seraph-kings :
Or with Uriel on the sunbeams glide ;
Or fiery horses of the storm bestride,
Lit with the rapture of their blazing flight—
Rapture to which your summer noon of pride,
And the fierce furnace of your coarse delight
Is cold as polar winter, dark as densest night.

What marvel, Spenser,³⁶ with those gifts of thine
Thou could'st endure the loss of hearth and home ?
To the base plunderer thy goods consign,
Thy house to the incendiary ; and roam
A beggar on the earth, beneath the dome
Of the bright heaven, and of thy brighter Dream !
And when a patron to the chamber clomb³⁷
Where thou lay'st dying of sharp want ; supreme
O'er Loss and Hunger, Poverty and Death, could'st deem

Thyself most happy ; nor his gifts to take
Would'st condescend, so far thy soul had passed
On her illustrious journey ; the day-break
Had seen so clearly ; nor had time to cast
A moment's glance behind, so fair and fast
The heavenly Visions came ; while the true Knight
Who all thy dreams of chivalry surpassed,
Flung o'er thee thronged with foes, his buckler bright,
And set thee in His Palace of Immortal Light.

There dwell with all thy brethren of the Lyre
Who sleep around thee ; ever dwell where thief
Breaks in no more ; nor hunger blights ; nor fire
Expels thee from thy toil ; nor cankering grief
Corrodes thy heart-strings. With thy goodly Chief⁸⁸
For ever dwell in Music's native sphere.
For ye are they who honoured the Leaf⁸⁹
That with the root abideth, when the year
Turns pale, and all its bloom lies dead—as yours doth
here.

Nor need ye envy those who yonder sleep
In splendour lone—'neath towering-monument,
And sumptuous shrine of gold and marble, keep
In death their State, still on vain glory bent,
Hedged from mortality of mean descent.
What King among them owned so bright a train
As those fair forms which still your fame augment ?
The Faerie Queen and all her Court remain.
Thou Monarch ! where is thine ? I search for it in vain !

And fresh and fair as when they first were drawn
By thy clear pencil, Chaucer, the quaint groups
Of England as thou knew'st her, in her dawn,
Live in our sight—the mixed and motley troops
Of Canterbury Pilgrims, o'er their stoups
Of cheering wine at Tabard Inn : or travelling
Down the old Road, with face-impurpling whoops
Of laughter, or deep sighs, as each, unravelling
His tale, instructs the pious band uncavilling.

•

'Neath phrases strange and language obsolete
We feel a pulse throb, and a form discern,
And faded features. As the winding-sheet
Shreds off, slowly emerges from her urn
Our stately England ; and our bosoms burn
The while we gaze on that dear, antique face,
And all its quaintness and its sweetness learn—
The simple grandeur and unconscious grace,
The dewy morning freshness of our English Race.

No painter could have limned those old-world forms
In lines so clear, colours so deep and true,
Or so enduring. Thy bright pen transforms
The page into a picture ; where we view
Face, figure, stature, garb, hair, fashion, hue,
Gifts, habits, fame, strange antic and brave feat ;
The outward man, and inward, old and new—
A sketch, a miniature, yet so complete,
The Time in living flesh and blood we seem to greet.

And while men love the country of their birth,
And love to trace its growth, and note its change ;
While faith remains in their forefathers' worth ;
And they delight through those old scenes to range—
So temptingly romantically strange ;
While Relics have a charm, and Fancy skill
To vivify, and History to arrange,
And Poetry and Eloquence to thrill ;
So long thy Song will live—its gentle task fulfil.

But where repose thy ashes, Bard sublime !⁴⁰
Whose star would make a Land immortal, though
All others vanished in the night of Time
Or thine alone God had commanded blow
Upon a barren heaven ? Beneath ? Ah no !
O England ! could'st thou bar thy loftiest son
From his true home ? Thy sky waxed all aglow
With his resplendence ; yet thou still didst shun
His name. Unequal contest ! The great Dead has won.

He climbed these walls—the irresistible,
Triumphant singer of God's victor band ;
The dauntless champion who, when Freedom fell
And fools and harlots spoiled his native land,
His spirit cheered with song and vision grand
Of the Heaven-foughten Battle of the True,
Whose reign on Earth no evil should withstand,
Though slow its progress, and its champions few,
Because the Power was His who all things doth subdue.

Meet vision for such seer ; “ so compassed round
With darkness and with danger ”—comrades gone
Some fallen, some faithless—faithful only found
To Truth and Freedom. From the world withdrawn,
Old, blind, poor, comfortless, a heavenly dawn
Brake on his gloom ; and when the splendour died,
Like the last, smiling sundown from the lawn
Of his lost Paradise, a heavenly Guide,
Led onward his dark steps, and set him by God’s side.

Dishonour small to one raised up so high,
To be excluded from his earthly peers.
Yet trusted he his land would not let die
His memory—fond yearning that endears
Soul so sublime, and answered with our tears !
While from his sword—the sword of Michael given
From armoury of God, the rebel spears,
Smit by its radiance pure, drifted and driven
Have bowed their earthly might, and owned a light from
Heaven.

And here thy memory triumphs ! Omen fair
Of nobler, gentler times ; unwonted star
Breaking clear through the Sun’s tyrannic glare,
The herald of a multitude from far
Climbing the world with Freedom’s rising car—
A brilliance multitudinous, to find
Its sphere one as its Source ; while all that bar
The accession of that Sovereignty of Mind,
Sink neath the fiat of Omnipotent Mankind.

Reproach me not, blest Shades, that I rehearse
Not all your bardic triumphs ; nor accuse
My heart of partial feeling, or my verse
Of blind neglect. For each of you my Muse
Ponders, loves deeply ; and compelled to choose,
(So brief her song) has these, your elders, wreathed
With these few fading laurels—the just dues
Of all ; who with your divers voices breathed
The same high truths, in deathless song bequeathed.

Thine, Beaumont⁴¹ to Dramatic Genius dear ;
Nor less to Friendship. (How in peace can'st sleep
Not feeling thy belov'd Fletcher near ?)
Thine, Jonson,⁴² Dryden,⁴³ Cowley,⁴⁴ Campbell.⁴⁵ Weep,
Stricken Muse ! that mocking Death should heap
So many mighty names into his maw,
And feed on them as if they were but sheep.
But such is Nature's universal Law,
Earth's finest wheat is reaped and leaves behind but straw,

Trod in Corruption's dunghill ; save what men
In the quick fields of genius have caught—
Fields ploughed and harrowed by industrious pen,
And by continuing patient labour brought
To enrich the future with new crops of Thought.
So ye abide. Your Life Death's storm outbraves ;
With knowledge, beauty, noble feeling fraught
Over the world in golden harvests waves,
And showers perpetual benedictions on your graves.

I would all slumbered in this nook whose Fame
Adorns its walls in statue, stone, or bust.
But other precious spots in England claim
The guardianship of their world-honouring dust :
His country churchyard Gray's,⁴⁶—a title just :
The mountains theirs⁴⁷ who loved to walk and dream
Amongst their lights and shades. In awful trust
Thy bones are held by Avon's sleepless stream,
Her child, our England's Pride—Shakespeare, thou Bard
Supreme !

What crowds of pilgrims hither would repair
Were those dear bones within these walls enshrined !
Thy *distant* grave, poor persecuted Player,
Has drawn the mightiest, noblest of mankind.
Such is the power of an Imperial Mind
To rise above the bar and blight of birth :
Embellished with its beauty, and refined
With its all-touching, all-transmuting worth,
The meanest sphere floats up a Planet o'er the Earth.

What wails were thine, what deep heart-breaking sobs
O'er Fortune's harsh decree that yoked thy soul⁴⁸
To the life-branding sports of vulgar mobs ;⁴⁹
And place-made Nothings,⁵⁰ who could dare to dole
Their rank, offensive pity to thee—roll
O'er thy grand head their insolent chariot wheels.
Vain worms of Mammon's dunghill ! in the hole
Of State-corruption bred ! Smooth, shining eels,
Wriggling their supple, slippery lengths about the heels

That trample on their boneless, painless pride
Which heals its wound, and from its cloven main
Whereof a nobler creature would have died,
Worm-like, projects new meekness, and again
Crawls 'neath the heel—of its skilled baseness vain.
Did such things look on thee with scornful eyes ?
No matter. Minnows cannot grasp the main,
Nor worms the mountain tunnel ; nor the flies
Of a May evening sail with seraphs round the skies.

They saw thee bent in a degrading task.
'Twas all they saw. Saw the archangel's head
Bowed to a pedlar's load ; nay, through its mask,
Not even that ; saw not thy vast wings spread,
And in thy calling so dishonoured
Orb thee a heaven of splendour, where such clods
Had been consumed like moths, or sunk like lead.
Earth-worms to earth ! Earth's builders to their hods !
But architects of angels' mansions to the gods !

'Tis not the calling ; 'tis the attentive ear
That makes the man ; who makes his world anew.
Kings may turn thrones to dunheaps, and their sphere,
Like a bright Lucifer's, be plunged into
A slough ; ⁵¹ and like that Star from Heaven which flew ⁵²
Into the rivers, changing them to gall,
The living arteries of the world imbue
With deadly poison ; and a nation fall
Upon the banks which Heaven ordained for life to all. ⁵³

And one of low descent and calling mean,
Exiled from home, pursued, proscribed and banned,
Seeking a rest 'mongst lepers—all the unclean ;
And wearing on his brow a public brand,⁵⁴
An object of contempt to all the land ;
May so his calling honour, so refine
Its vile surroundings, and its power expand ;
Thé world-drudge in Heaven's livery may shine
With elder seraphs round the Chariot Divine.

What was the Stage to thee ? A livelihood :
And a convenient channel for thy Thought ;
School for the True, the Beautiful, the Good,
Wherein to learn the Wisdom thou hast taught—
Wisdom so earnestly, so deeply sought,
Each play viewed rightly, is a stage defined
In thy great spirit's progress ; although nought
Is heard of thee but echoes undesigned :
The whole, the unconscious history—drama of thy mind.

Men call thy page obscene. So is the Sun
That shines on dunghills—shows them up withal.
So are the winds that o'er their odours run
And puff them in our face with rudest squall:
Had these men lived with thee, and written at all,
I trow their writings had been more obscene ;
Where thy wings skimmed, the age had seen them crawl
Who thy pure grandeurs pass, like birds unclean
Scenting the rotten carcass with a nose so keen.

But for one weed what Paradises fair
Their fragrance breathe, their loveliness unfold !
We walk on paths of jewels. All the air
Melts into music. Earth is no more old,
But young, as when upon the rind of gold
The Eden velvet lay ; and they who dwell
Amidst its blooms, in beauty manifold,
Almost persuade us woman never fell,
And waft us from the world on wings of Ariel.⁵⁵

This was thy task, sweet Poet, the old world
To take into thy bosom ever young,
And give it back to weary men impearled
With the bright dews of a new beauty, hung
Upon its fields and flowers—fair jewels strung
Upon the roseate neck of the new morn
From the fresh-opened fount of splendour sprung,
Which in each poet's golden birth is born—
Time's forehead many-crowned with epochs new to adorn.

Nor less to lift into thy healing soul
The maimed, bruised, bleeding race of human kind :
In thy grand wholeness to conceive it whole,
And clothe it with the glory of thy mind,
In which all forms of beauty lay enshrined :—
Beauty, alas ! that owns no counterpart
In single soul ; to which the world were blind
Had it not leaped from thy prolific heart,
Clad in a thousand flames and forms of living Art.

And though thy hand searched all the depths of shame,
And traced Sin's winding ways with Art precise ;
What was it but the two-edged sword of flame
Tracking the Serpent through each deep device
By which he blights the human Paradise ?
Lo ! in the clouds, o'er Richard and Macbeth
The feast of ghosts, their wine of sacrifice
Drinking with grim delight. Comes there no breath
Inspired, through the dead air that whispers " Sin is
death ? " ⁵⁵

And thou hast filled the world with crops of mirth—
This weary world in which the thistles grow ;
And heart-wrung men have found a kindlier earth
Since thou didst bathe it in the cheerful glow
Of thy victorious joy. Where is the woe
That shakes not to its downfall round the ears
Of Bottom ? Does not merry Falstaff throw
Into the heart of Grief a thousand spears ?—
Sun-shafts of laughter through the ceaseless rain of tears.

But rest, Magician ! Thou hast buried deep
Thy magic staff. Beneath thy head it lies.
Beside the bank where the charmed waters creep,⁵⁷
Beneath thy childhood's dear, familiar skies,
Sleep, sweetly sleep ! while on thy peaceful eyes
Comes no rude dream to break thy well-earned rest.⁵⁸
Where watching Nature heard thy infant cries,
And felt a pang of rapture thrill her breast,
Like the old priestess by the awful god possessed ;

And watched with eager eyes thy opening lips ;
And listened for the deep oracular sound ;
And saw thy spirit like a great eclipse
Pass o'er thy compeers, while thy light profound
Filled all men's eyes ; and heard the mighty round
Of ages rolling to thy chant sublime :—
There, watching o'er thy slumbers is she found
Breathing the sweets thou loved'st—the “ wild thyme,”
“ Oxlips,” “ musk-roses,” “ violets ” and the sweet-breath'd
lime.⁶⁰

Amidst the meads where flit the butterflies,
By night the fairies dance, she sits to bid
Her tiny elves light at the “ glowworms' eyes ”
Their nightly “ tapers ” round thee ; and forbid
Raven and “ clamorous owl.” In watch-towers hid
Of close-shut flowers, some, acorn-helmed, keep guard ;
And some with frosty moonbeam-lances, strid
On grasses tall and stately, smite the shard
Of snail or beetle, drawing near their sleeping Bard.

When from the old Church Tower the iron clock
Tolls o'er the hamlet midnight's passing bell,
These timid elves, smit by the fearful shock,
While quivers each frail fabric where they dwell,
Shake in their armour, as they heard their knell.
For they remember how it stunned their ears
When he was smitten whom they loved so well.
Who can reproach their nightly-rising fears,
Watered and kept alive by nightly-flowing tears ?

And oft Titania comes on pilgrimage
From "India's farthest steep" to that dear shrine,
And with the splendour of her equipage
Parks, fields, hills, meadows in the moonlight shine ;
For many a mile her army's glittering line
Frosts the charmed landscape ; while each twig and leaf
Swarms with her silken pages gossamer-fine,
All laden with the treasures of their chief,
Spears, gems, robes, crowns, ethereal beyond belief.

And many a revel makes she on the grass
In honour of her poet sleeping near.
Knights, armed with reedy lance and bark-curias
Plated with rime, from forest stripped or mere,
Hold joust and tournament ; and some career
In oaken cars by nimble squirrels drawn
Down the long avenues ; each charioteer
Arrayed in colours varied as the dawn,
Startling with crackling whips and shouts the timid fawn.

And wondering much at men's indifference,
Oftimes they mimic some immortal scene
Of their loved bard. 'Midst the magnificence
Of ancient hall and castle, while the sheen
Of ghostly warriors gleams the walks between,
They mount their magic stage, and strut their hour,
Like mightier Courtiers, round their King and Queen,
Till silver-armoured Morn from her cloud-tower
Looks forth, and each creeps fading to his acorn-bower.

With hair of weeds and rags of tattered leaves
Some dance round cauldrons o'er the lantern swung
Of Will-o'-the-Wisp. While each his dark spell weaves
Round the doomed Thane with moonstone-buckler hung
Upon his puny arm. And others, strung
To mirthful key, banter the wry-faced moon
With merry quips, moving the stars among
Pale and love-lorn, looking as she would swoon,
She hangs so low and listless in the skies of June.

And one engrosses his ethereal form
With moss from oak-roots plucked, and new-grown wool
From slumbering flocks ; and dons the uniform
Of the fat Knight ; while round him, all in dool
Shamble his ranks—a fairy ragged-school—
In skins of moles and bat-vans ; and with flames
Of marsh-fire sworded. Or upon toad-stool
In leaf-thatched tavern sits ; and now defames,
And kisses now, the nectared king-cup-bearing dames.

But, hark ! the scorner ! “ Man, thou talk'st of air ! ”
And be it so. 'Tis only man can see
Something where nothing is. He hath as 'twere
Sowed earth with his own Immortality.
There's not an ocean, stream, mead, wood, grove, tree,
But hath with spirits teemed of marvellous birth,
Of his o'erflowing soul the progeny ;
Deathless creations witnessing the worth
Of that which came not *from*, and went not *to* the earth.

So 'midst thy living Dreams, Dead Dreamer, sleep !
Not from the dust they sprang. Not to the dust
Do they return. But o'er thee ever keep
The freshness of their youth. And though mistrust
Dissolves its forms, doubtless the thought is just
That spirit life pervades all things we see.
Nor let us e'er forget thy faith robust,
" Horatio, more things in Heaven and earth there be
Than are dreamt of in our philosophy."

Would thou wert here ! The Abbey envies thee
Thou Avon's rustic spire ! that hast forbid
Its myriad-peopled City's bended knee
His shrine to honour ; and dost daily bid
The careless plough-boy see what thou hast hid
From nobler gaze. But, cheer ye, longing eyes !
All Literature is Shakespeare's pyramid.
There, in a kingly sepulture he lies,
The Language for his grave-robe. Nay, he never dies !

Here ends my third day's Song. The day is spent
The darkness falls again. What more remains
To inspire, the Muse, her footsteps this way bent
Another day shall find : in other strains
Praise other names ; unless her poet-pains
Shall wake but scorn, or on deaf ears expire ;
Then, if her tuneful voice she still retains,
For solace she shall strike her lonely lyre,
And burn for Heaven alone her spirits' trembling fire.

CANTO THE FOURTH.

SLOWLY descends old London to her Dead,
Historic pile on pile beneath the Doom
Of iron-footed Time, or hoof more dread
Of the pearl-trampling Swine of Greed. "Give room!"
Cry the wild, headlong herd. "What shall presume
To stop our progress?" With the Fiend possessed,
Nought that is his. But from thy Living Gloom
Dread Shrine! looks forth a Face. Who dare molest
The Ancient of the Days throned in His ancient Rest?

Throned here ere Britain's throne of Diamond
Upon her adamantine rocks was stayed;
Ere Commerce, breaking from the wizard bond
Of the bright Adriatic, had surveyed
Her future home and empire; and, arrayed
In all the splendours of her Eastern spoil,
Blazing in gold and gems, Imperial Maid!
Surprised our simple mariners at their toil;
And for her new Dominions claimed their Sea and Soil.

Lord of this islet by an earlier claim,
The Sacred Hand had drawn around His own
The circle of the Inviolable Name.
From its thorn-thickets, as from Horeb's lone,
A Voice spake, "Loose thy golden sandals!" Prone
The Queen of Nations fell, her feet unshod,
Gems showering from her head, and hands, and zone,
And felt the "terrible place" was holy, trod
By the Invisible Feet of the Consuming God.

And slowly she has gathered here the ships
Of all the Lands. The fisher spreads his net
On her deserted Tyre, and an eclipse
Has fallen on Venice—nay the sun has set.
Where the world's subject navies once were met,
The widowed waves sigh round each marble stair,
And chide its aged halls that can forget
The Wealth and Beauty that assembled there,
When Venice sat, Sea-Throned—Phantom of Light and Air.

And here, through all her new and vaster reign,
Her Consecration, Glory and Defence,
This House has stood: and while it shall remain
Strong in her People's love and reverence,
England shall stand, and rule the nations thence.
But when that reverence, choked in worldly care
And luxury, and wealth-bred indolence,
Fails from thy heart, O England! then beware!—
Hark to the ominous sounds that throng thy ocean air!

The voices that around Jerusalem
Once cried, in plaintive tones, "Let us depart!"
Will wail around thy Throne and Diadem,
And, muttering, fly through street and hall and mart,
Flutter among thy masts and flags, and start
Into strange clearness midst thy Battles' din.
For He who 'gainst the spoiler's hand and heart
Leaves His House awless—bulwarkless *within*,
Will lead His Angels out, and call His Vultures in.

The vulture to her carrion! Wheresoe'er
The carcase is, there let her gorge, and glut
Her greedy craw—dead Nation, rotten character,
Or Church corrupt,—and let her stagger and strut,
Blood-drunk, down each corpse-crammed, gore-deluged
 rut—
Death's flying sexton, summoning her brood
To the world's great Aceldamas that shut
Heroic lives, when courses base and lewd
Have all their glorious manhood cankered and subdued.

And let her swoop on Thee, thou dainty Queen!
And all foul things assemble to the feast,
If thou shalt be as other Lands have been
The slave and votary of the Mammon-Beast
That to its dwarf, dust-amorous form decreased
The godlike Realms of old. For who would keep
Beneath the Sun a State whose life has ceased?—
A festering plague-spot midst the wholesome deep.
From thy pure breast, thou living Sea, dead England sweep.

But no, dear Land ! The life Augustine breathed
Into thy being in thy Infancy ;
That struggled through thy fainting Youth, and seethed
'Neath thy fierce Manhood till its course was free,
Strong, full, majestic, like thy native Sea ;
Shall roll in reverence deep, and force sublime.
And thou, blest Temple ! from thy banks shalt be
Witness, while church and nation, with joint chime,
Thy living waves roll ebbless up the shores of Time.

I sat beneath thy gloom ; in sadness thought
On ages dead, dead Englands. When rang out
“ We are not dead but manifoldly wrought
Into this many-featured Time.” With shout
I started to my feet. And lo ! throughout
The Building shone—a grand embodiment
Of Time's immortal Essence that without
Invisible stood, until thy Fabric lent
Its many-fashioned grace for form and monument.

Thou England, hundredfold, incorporate !
Instinct with spirit, organic, every stone
With her life vibrating, articulate ;
Eras, like nerve to nerve, and bone to bone,
Knit in thy structure. Into thee have grown
Her struggles, triumphs, failures, glories, tears ;
Nay even her infirmities. Each tone
Of her soul's music lingering on our ears,
And blending into Harmony the chimes of all the years.

Time, like a serpent, casts his skin. The years
Are masks in which the Antic needs must range
His shifting stage; the aspects of the spheres
That needs must roll, and rolling, needs must change;
But neath the surface ever new and strange,
Abides the Eternal that, with Sovereign call,
In sweetest and sublimest interchange,
Makes ages, men, tribes, planets, systems fall
Into a living unity with each and all.

Methought old Time—that ne'er-caught fugitive—
Amidst this maze of aisles had lost his way,
Lain down and slept; and, slipping a stone gyve
Upon his nimble feet, there, as he lay,
A cunning hand had changed him into grey
And wrinkling stone, and fixed his aspect clear:
That curious children of a far off day,
Wondering what manner of man their father dear
Was in the olden world, might come and find him here.

The crowd sweeps past thee. I have stood and marked
Its heedless haste; and marvelled thing so fair,
Renowned, romantic, regal, reverend, barked
With hoary age (even the reckless Air
Is held in awe-struck pause, and noon's fierce glare
Steeped in thy solemn sweetness), that a shrine
Hewn from the Nation's grandeur should stand there
Its express Image, Human and Divine;
Nor Patriotism nor Piety show one passing sign.

Thou art to me a Presence ! More alive
Than all this restless, flimsy, vapid scene ;
These petty passions that around thee strive,
And with their paltry prizes thy serene
And star-crowned fame affront. And I have seen
A lovelier light, a more substantial Dream
Amidst thy shadows, solemn-sceptred Queen !
Than this young Day, in novel Arts supreme,
Can weave into its brightest, swiftest, farthest beam.

Present is not all substance ; nor is Past
All shadow. There are shadows lying there
Huge, luminous,—rocks of Gold from which are cast
Our new-made grandeurs. Epochs die to wear
The garments of the glorified. They share
The Resurrection Beauty. Lo ! they rise
In hosts of white-robed angels. All the air
Is bright with them. The glare that fills men's eyes
Hides those calm, distant, risen glories of the skies.

How much that occupies so large a space
Within the imperious all-important Now,
Things of prime interest, chief delight, no trace
Will leave behind—too flimsy to endow
The world with a poor ruin ! A lopped bough
That floats away ; a fly that o'er the tide
Dances, and leaves no image there. But thou
Abidest midst the glories that abide,
And glorifying all, by all art glorified !

The wealth of ages mantles o'er thy walls ;
Wisdom and worth rising from out the years,
From battle-fields, and scaffolds ; and the halls
Of Kings and Counsellors ; from Martyrs' tears,
And tomes of Sages, and the Pioneers
Of Enterprise and Science—each best soul
And bravest. All the virtue of the years
Around thee, through thee, from thee seems to roll,
Till, Sun in Sun, ye shine—one bright transfigured Whole.

The cream of Time stands thick on those still days.
The earnest superficialism that rules
This modern period, gives itself nor space
Nor rest to ripen. We have thousand pools
For their few oceans ; shoals of clever fools
Darting with dexterous wit where solemn, slow,
But strong and grand, leviathan rolled. The schools
Are multiplied, but they who draw the bow
To the full head are few. Thou solid Abbey show

The Vaunting Age thy massive bulk, thy frame
Of workmanship elaborate, practised skill,
Profound invention, concentrated aim,
All that can awe, inspire, melt, comfort, thrill,
And the Repose that doth combine and fill
The whole like God. And tell the restless time
Thy slow and solemn world had stronger will,
More settled purpose, powers in happier chime,
A braver heart, a soul more restful and sublime.

How venerable thou seemest as I stand
Gazing on thee from this thy earliest shrine !¹
Round which thou hast grown up—thou and this Land ;
Thyself a Flower of England's life Divine,
While all her choicest memories combine
To make thee visibly what thou hast been—
The fountain of her splendour ! Round thee shine
The heroes of each grand, immortal scene,
By thee inspired to labour for thy rest serene.

The fragrance of thy holy oil has dwelt
Around our crown'd heads ; hallowed and cheered
And awed their councils. Warriors have felt
Thy presence in the fight, and nothing feared
But thy disowning : and thy gates revered
Have stopped mad Murder's blood-hounds ; to Grief, wild
With fear, like Heaven's arms spread, they have endeared
Their shadow like God's peace : while, domiciled
In thy still breast, Ages have met, embraced, and smiled.

Here, in appropriate just preeminence
Amidst the Genius of a nation shrined,
The central star of its magnificence,
Brighter than all its orbs of might and mind
Faith holds, with one accord to her assigned,
The Chief Seat at the Banquet of the Dead.
While the unenvying ghosts around reclined
The praises of her excellent beauty spread,
And bind Elysian laurels for her honoured head.

Marvel not, therefore that, in lonely thought
I wandering 'mongst these tombs, where sleep the brave,
The beautiful, the wise, the eloquent, caught,
Or seemed to catch, from every heedful grave
A sound as of sweet voices, wave on wave
Rolling and blending round this midmost shrine :
And while I reverent attention gave
I knew the burden of that strain Divine—
“ The chief of these is Charity ! ” Saxon, 'twas thine !

'Tis meet that in a Temple built for God
Its canonized Monarch should be such as thou.
No warrior dyed in blood, nor tyrant shod
With brazen hoof ; but one whose gentle brow
Wears but one glory—that he kept his vow :
A kingly saint, a spirit undefiled.
Which of you all his claim would disallow ?
Or is there one could mate his spirit mild
Who kept till death unstained the beauty of the child ? ’

And meet it is that in a nation famed
For simple manners, and plain speech, and life
Of homely excellence, and love unshamed,
And faith and purity of child and wife,
And sanctity and love of Home ; that strife,
Save in defence, forbids on field or flood—
'Tis meet in nation with such feelings rife,
Its type-King, circled by its bravest blood,
Should sleep the Pilgrim sleep, and know no name but
“ Good.”

Nor doth it less beseem a Saxon Race
That fell to conquering Norman's keener dart,
And rose up Saxon, clad with Norman grace,
But Greater Saxon, as the soul and heart
Are greater than the beautifying art—
'Tis meet that here the Saxon should be set,
Amidst the assembled Kings that ne'er depart,
But in this Temple of Plantagenet
Bow to the ancient, sovereign, deathless Saxon yet.

I sat me down upon an agèd stone
And sank into a solemn reverie,
By fancy wafted on till I had flown
Round many seas and lands ; but every sea
And every land was linked, dear Fane, to thee
By deed inseparable, or name, or prayer,
Or sculptured stone that keeps the memory
Of those who field or flood went forth to dare,
And left their fond hearts here, their fallen bodies there.

And thus by secret and mysterious lines
Of spiritual sympathy thy walls
Are knit with other realms ; while round thee shines
Scene after scene of glory that enthalls
The patriot, while it softens or appalls ;
Until thy sombre stones are frescoed o'er
With battles, at whose loud, inspiring calls
I start erect upon thy crimsoned floor,
And hating not war less, I love my country more.

It was a time of tumult. Party feud
Ran high, and all the neighbouring Senate shook ;
While, echoing 'mongst the cloudy multitude,
The encountering thunders all the nation strook
With doubt, or fear, or passion. I betook
My footsteps hither, as a ship storm-caught
Runs from the gale into some sheltered nook.
I came and looked on the calm dead who fought
And rested : and a holy rest in me was wrought.

For I perceived that God works not by one
But many, though His end be one : and makes
Our torrents diverse to His ocean run—
The sea of universal Good that breaks
In rising ridges up the world, and shakes
The tyrants' thrones with every climbing year ;
And on its breast the coming Glory takes.
For though the foe his mountain-barriers rear
The world must roll and rise with God for Charioteer.

There lay the workers, side by side, at rest ;
There stood their statues in mute harmony ;
The earnest difference in each faithful breast
Blent into Death's eternal unity ;
Levelled like stormy waves of times gone by.
I gazed till their calm effigies seemed to grow
To symbols of their toils, inseparably
Blent, like Heaven's storm-created, peaceful Bow,
Into the Land's aureola—one resplendent glow.

Thus saw I in this reconciling Fane
The nation's oneness—oneness of its toil,
And one End issuing from the tangled skein
Of personal ambitions, and the coil
Of dark intrigues, and all the wild turmoil
Of party strife—each individual goal
Lapsing and lost, and all the separate spoil
Divided by the Power whose blest control
Subdues each single will and welfare to the Whole.

For men have divers ends, and e'en the best
Have mixtures that corrupt their proper aim :
God hath but one—the Nation's final rest
In His perfection ; and His purging flame
Cleanses it from alloy : nor less the fame
Of these whom natural infirmity
Betrayed to ends less Heavenly. Their good name
Death hath re-issued with Heaven's sovereign die,
And o'er their frailties dropped God's blessed charity.

For self is mortal ; being separate
From the great Whole in which life dwells alone.
And all men do for self partakes the fate
Of that for which 'tis done. The seeds thus sown
Bear flowers that seed not, which when they have blown
Wither and have an end. But Deed or Thought
For Country and for God, a living stone
Into the living Temple grows. For nought
Can perish with the Eternal Worker's work inwrought.

O faithful saying writ, inspired of old !
"None liveth to himself and dieth none,"
But to the Lord, who doth all lives enfold
Like the world-compassing, world-centreing sun.
Moving in nearer orbits as they run,
Their radiance brightening as their end draws nigh,
Anon they are not found. The life begun
In Him, is lost to all beneath the sky,
Because in Him it liveth, brighteneth endlessly.

Ye Statesmen—England's voices hushed to sleep !
Ye Poets—England's seers by death struck blind !
Ye Patriots—warriors slain on field or deep !
Ye Lights extinguished of the nation's mind !
Ye perished Benefactors of mankind !
And ye who only set before the sun
The blushing follies, frailties hid behind
This mass of splendour ! See your triumphs spun
Into the nation's Glory—manifoldly one.

O say not, moralizer, in thy haste
"These are a motley and incongruous band,
Huddled together with no pious taste,
But indiscriminate charity !" The Land
Is greater than a sect. He who would brand
One with a curse had need be chamberlain
To the great Judge. How know'st thou in what hand
Or brow Heaven's secret mark shines ? E'en on Cain
God's brand was mercy's seal. Even he lived not in vain.*

But think thou rather in a commonweal
Are many labourers ; and in that Divine
Are some who but imperfectly reveal
Their higher life : and haply some might shine
With starry lustre could some buried line
That clears them be unearthed ; others would fade
To lesser lights ; some fall from Heaven whose shrine
We honour as a Saint's could Time's kind shade
Uplift. Content thee then that Heaven them all has
weighed.

I muse here till I seem almost estranged
From present scenes and interests. Issuing hence
The sunlight and the busy streets seem changed ;
The living world looks dream-like, so intense
With the dead world has been my conference.
“ There is real life ” think I, in this old Pile
That can work thus upon my bodily sense,
And from th' enclosing Age my feet beguile
Through Time's long colonnades, stretched down this
lengthening aisle.

Delightful feeling ! Through my being flows
A sense of many lives and mingling years ;
While each dull stone around me warms and glows
With living tints, and light of smiles and tears,
And with a human soul its face endears,
Till the whole place is changed to spirit all.
The limiting Present disappears ;
I walk the Past as through a crowded Hall,
And all I see I am—its mirror, mouthpiece, thrall.

Thus gain I fuller life. I am no more
The creature of a day— my years a span :
But, ocean-like, I range the extended shore
Of the whole Immortality of man.
Conformed to all the changing scenes I scan,
Successes, failures, losses, victories,
Whate'er has passed since England's life began
Flows, mingling, through me, and I fall and rise,
A wave that swells, bursts, sinks, re-swells and never dies.

O glorious Human Fabric ! doubly dear
Because within thee framed to things Divine,
There dwells a human life, that brings thee near ;
All passions, moods, emotions, round thee twine
In fadeless memories. While thy arches shine
With the Eternal Light to which they soar,
A thousand human interests combine
To bid me kneel, and bless with tears thy floor,
And while not less revering make me love thee more.

I would not have thee other than thou art,
I would not wipe out one dark stain from thee ;
'Twould but remove thee farther from my heart,
And mar the sweet, endearing charm for me
That softens now thy solemn sanctity.
I love to think hot tears have bathed thy ground
And hotter blood. 'Tis meet that thou should'st be
One with thy people, with their sufferings bound
And sins, while with Heaven's glory compassing them
round.

Musing on thee thou seemest to unfold
An allegory of the soul. Begun
In the sweet, simple, childlike days of old,
When natural feeling and Divine were one,
And life seemed like a golden, happy sun
Rolling in heavenly air by angels tended,
And of the mocking Thought-fiends there were none,
But Dreams, Realities, so sweetly blended
That none could tell where those or these began or ended.

Thence from the splendour of thy golden reign
Passing into the clearer, commoner air
In which dreams die and angels, and retain
Only the mystic halo round their hair ;
While wit to win, and strength to do and dare
Employ the wakened sense ; and vision and dream
Come only in the retinue of Care,
Or yoked in gay Ambition's prancing team ;
Heaven far behind—before—Earth central and supreme.*

Then scathed with fire of worldly war and scarred.
Silence and Calm—twin doves—scared from their nest ;
Prayer but a burst of passion, and the hard
Face of the warrior from the priestly vest
Towering like thundercloud o'er Alp's white breast ;
While Meditation like an angel stands
Far off and weeps her exile. Then thy rest
Profaned by sacrilegious, murderous bands,
And clinging Faiths and Hopes all slain by impious
hands.

Then sinking under Mammon's vulgar yoke,
A prey to every paltry, petty claim ;
Huckster, showman ; thy sanctity a cloak
For grinding greed. Where monarchs felt no shame
To haven, all the hunted, wounded game
Pursued of wide-mouthed gold-hounds—debtors, thieves,
Flying for cover, till their evil fame
Has blistered thy pure beauty. The filth cleaves
So close thy soul its foulness sees not, nor believes.

Then wakening to a sense of all the wrong,
The shame, the sadness ; seeing, feeling whence
Thy soul has fallen, and with cryings strong,
And stronger purpose, thy pure eminence
Resolved to repossess ; with zeal intense
Scourging forth all the huckstering, thieving crew,
And making thee a fitting residence
For God ; if peradventure He should view
His ancient Rest with grace, and there His Throne renew.

Then thy new Consecration (neath the Dove
Descending) with returning loveliness,
Born of thy soul's return to her first love,
A holier fervour and a heavenlier grace ;
The world no longer clasped in thine embrace,
But kneeling 'neath thy consecrating palm.
No visions but the True—theirs on whose face
The light of God shines as they waiting calm
'Neath New Jerusalem's walls, like thee lift ceaseless Psalm.

How many changes in Time's passing show,
Old Abbey, in thy suit of solemn grey!
Twixt thine unchanging columns fixed below
Hast thou looked down on, sparkling on its way
In full-blown pomp of Coronation Day.
Gorgeous, demure, fantastic, quaint, refined,
Ridiculously odd, or grandly gay;
All shapes, hues, fashions, whilst with constant mind
Thou hast beheld them, scene-like, rolled the stage be-
hind.

So passeth all the fashion of this world.
So passed it in Jerusalem, Greece and Rome;
So has it passed in England, death-ward whirled;
So will it pass till all heaven's jewelled Dome
Is dust, and vanity no more a home
Holds 'neath the changing sun. Thou sober Pile!
That seest it break, like rainbow-coloured foam,
As it sweeps down thy rocky, pillared aisle,
I see thy reverend face wrinkling with pitying smile.

And are they gone—all gone—the gorgeous scenes
Thou hast beheld? Yes, all. Vanished like smoke.
Peers, prelates, warriors, princes, Kings and Queens,
All fallen together 'neath the silent yoke:
No relic of their pomp, save this old Oak
And older Stone that, in their plainness, seem
More like a satire than memorial. Broke
Cries from yon tombs? "Life's varied pomp's a dream,
But Death's monotonous Grandeur permanent and
supreme!"

But how significant it seems to me
That this rough Stone, and this plain oaken Chair
Have borne, still bear the weight of royalty,
While all the Nation's great and brave and fair
Do homage round the homely ancient pair !
Symbols, in their simplicity profound,
Of qualities that true Royalty upbear—
Life's plain and simple virtues—common ground
Of Glory, whether penury or pomp surround.

King because greater man—supremely great
In fundamental attributes that make
The substance and supremacy of a State ;
The People, throning him for country's sake,
In him behold their excellences take
Due place, distinction, visible eminence ;
Thus in his honour honoured, glad they make
Their rough-hewn, rustic strength bear the immense
Burden of national Glory, royal magnificence.

So massed in wedded might and splendour stand
Boulder and oak, purple and gold and gem,
Plainness and majesty ; and this old Land,
Rooted in granite, oak of giant stem,
Wears, like a flower, each new-blown diadem.
Alas ! the grandeur of the blossoming dies.
Those pomps—in all this Fane what trace of them ?
But these plain things remain to bless our eyes,
Like the dear common qualities they symbolize.

In this small plot I trace the rise and fall
Of nations. Saxon England's birth ;² death :⁴ fate
Of Wales :⁵ of Scotland :⁶ and of France :⁷ with all
The Victories in Palestine.⁸ Yon gate
Reveals the Roses' bridal.⁹ Chair of State
And Stone the vaster Wedding—South and North
In one Great Britain.¹⁰ Yon elaborate
And ponderous marbles summon India forth.¹¹
Was e'er so small a space so vast ? or of such worth ?

Thus have the waves of England's rising tide
Of Life and Glory marked their proud advance
Upon this Fabric. Nay they all abide—
Transformed to stone. While the past dissonance
And strife of inner Progress that enhance
Her Harmony fulfilled—Thought, Feeling, Taste,
Religion, Rule—each changing utterance
Perpetuated, localized, embraced—
Are by its Heavenly Bow all unified and graced.

Without that Covenant Sign of Higher Good
Cold were its interests, separate and unblest.
These pillars in a wilderness had stood,
In chaos of wild passions, midst a nest
Of Dragons ; or, like Gadara's tombs, possessed
Of Evil Spirits. But this hallowed Bond,
Drawing its discords into holiest rest,
Steeps it in Heaven's own smiles and weepings fond,
And joins it to the tearless, strifeless world beyond.

This its chief Glory tarries with it still,
The one fair feature that has not decayed.
Kings bring no gifts its treasures to fill,
Nor seek a grave beneath its hallowed shade.
Yet is its venerable aspect made,
By lack of earthly ornament, more clear :
In innocent garments of pure Praise arrayed
It looks more reverend as it is more dear
Than when a nation, awe-struck, fell and worshipped here.

Hark ! the clear child-voice in the morning Psalm,
Midst the grey gloom of a dead, mouldering Past,
Piercing the solemn everlasting calm,
That broods here like Time's Phantom dim and vast.
So while the world grows old, and centuries cast
Their withered forms into the grave, O Soul —
A child in faith, hope, duty to the last —
O'er all the wrecks of creeds and systems roll
Thy clear, pure notes, and keep thy primal freshness
whole !

I love thee not alone because thou art
Shrine of our monarchs since our Realm began :
Thou hast a tenderer claim upon my heart,
Thy witness, loudening as the ages ran,
To the prime value, dignity of man.
Thy early voice, in gracious whisperings,
Calling brave hearts into thy royal clan,
Proclaiming who his Country serves or sings
A meet Companion is, for ever, of her Kings.

And, widening with the Nation's aim and thought,
That circle from thy royal centre spread,
Till, like a nine-fold shield ¹³ around it wrought,
Lay rank on rank the great heroic dead,
Each in his tent guarding the royal bed.
And all thy Cross ¹³ at length is studded bright
With jewels, meet to deck an Empire's head,
That in their varied, mingling, blended light
Their Country's guerdon with their Monarch's grace unite.

So while a new Supremacy arose,
Wove with the first into one seamless Whole,
It claimed its title to a like repose ;
And they grew one in death who, one in soul,
Had sought in life a common good and goal.
Kings in that other Sovereignty of Mind,
With true Kings one in service and control,
Ruling the mass with ignorant passions blind,
And sacrificing self to lift and crown mankind.

And all around they slumber throng on throng,
Forgotten heroes of forgotten fights,
With silent singers of a silenced song,
And statesmen, conquerors of our cherished rights
Held till the tome which their old strifes recites
Reads like an idle tale. 'Tis but man's lot.
Time blazons, dims, clouds, darkens, then, benights.
But little would they mourn their names forgot,
Knew they their work grew, multiplied, and perished not.

Yet here and there from dark Oblivion's deep
Shines out a star that Time has quenched in vain ;
That promises its ancient fame to keep .
While Wisdom, Beauty, Excellence remain,
And Liberty preserves her blissful reign.
Enjoy your honours happier, favoured few !
Memorials of the long forgotten train
Who trod your path, and vanished ; but with you
Share the Immortal Rest and Triumph of the True.

Yes, here ye lie, Kings—People ! Happy pledge !
Embracing each the other—joined and blent.
Never to strive nor part ; the privilege
Of each united in a last assent ;
One benison, one grave, one monument !
A joint prediction of the two-fold thread
Of England's life drawn closer, till th' event
Shall justify the blood her patriots shed—
The living Nation one Communion like the Dead.

I brought a Book of modern Prophecy—
A prophecy of England's hastening fall.
The Vision filled with fear the soul of me.
Vainly the page I opened. For from all
The tombs, and monuments erect and tall
Broke hissing scorn and laughter, shout on shout
Triumphant. Then a gloom that did appal
Fell ; and the ghastly lightning from without
Lit the dead faces never darkened yet with doubt.

Like a fierce burst of simultaneous ire
Spoke out the thunder rolling o'er the pile,
And, from the storm-shroud, in the wrathful fire
Flashed all the warriors down the darkened aisle,
Frowning upon the evil prophet vile,
And me, whose hasty inconsiderate fear
Had done them wrong. When the sweet Sun's new smile
Revealed their placid features, calm and clear
My Faith was. Birds of evil omen brood not here.

Hither ye fearful spirits ! From the tomb,
Of statesmen, warriors, martyrs England calls.
What read ye on these sepulchres ? Her Doom ?
Is this the prophecy that round these walls
Glow in a thousand lines blood-writ, and falls
In glories over all this sacred floor—
A splendour that each patriot's feet enthral—
Whose intersecting, endless circles pour
From sun-crowned victors numberless her name who bore.¹⁵

Speak Chatham,¹⁴ thundering from thy marble throne !
And thou, brave Wolfe,¹⁵ with thy last gasp reply !
And you, ye captains, ¹⁶ whose colossal stone
Invites the world to learn how Britons die !
And ye whose glory streams, as from the sky,
Through yonder monumental blazoned panes ! ¹⁷
Flash, thunder back the base, prophetic lie,
And tell the foe the ashes in your veins,
Like dead volcanoes would blaze out and melt his chains.

Methinks the storm of an Invader's tread
Would wake e'en thee, fierce Hammer of the Scot !¹⁸
Dreaming of conquest even among the dead,
And listening for the feet that have forgot
To bear thy bones forth that with lingering rot
And dull delay. Methinks the strange alarm
Would make them burst Death's everlasting knot,
And with triumphant valour shout " Arm ! Arm !"
Transforming men to gods with their heroic charm.

Enjoy thy rest, brave warrior ! Conqueror's foot
Shall ne'er disturb thy grave. None wander here
But those who love, or those who dread. The root
Of England's Oak through Scotland's Granite sheer
Has struck. As England was to thee, so dear
Are they to one another. Therefore sleep
And take thy rest. And no Invader fear—
We are thy seed. Let him but fret our deep—
From South and North our father Edward's soul shall
sweep.

O Nation, rich in Patriots ! richer none ;
Thou may'st exalt thy head amidst the world.
No braver deed saw glorious Marathon,
Or that blue Gulf from which the foe was hurled
Like snow flakes on a south gale tossed and whirled
All melting as they fly ; not eager throng
Of earth's prime race heard eloquence more impearled
Or forged in belt more dire, or links more strong :
Than Wolfe wrought, Chatham lightning-quivered, poured
along.

Thou Eagle-spirit ! born for storms of State,
To yoke and drive the wild sun-blooded steeds
Of rising empire—bear the world-wide weight
Of its meridian splendour—that no needs
Knewest except thy country's—wrought'st thy deeds
For her alone ; that hadst one heart and gave
It all away—to her. Brave heart that bleeds,
Burns never more—tamed, frozen in the grave !
O Death, thou hadst fierce strife to make this King thy
slave !

O memorable strife ! Immortal scene !
The world-crowned gladiator whose dim eye
And shrunken limbs tell tales of what have been—
The grip of steel, the strife, the victory ;
He comes to strive once more before he die.
“Nay veteran, rest ! Thy laurels are all won ;
Stake them on no new venture.” “Tempter, fly !
Laurels that are not England's have I none ;
If she know loss, or blight, or stain I am undone.

Know'st not the brightest Jewel in her crown
Is plucked at ? and weak, craven, *English* hands
False to their guardianship, her old renown,
Hold out the prize, and bid the recreant bands
A welcome to their booty ? Shall demands
Like these be heard and I be dumb ? My tongue
Cleave to my mouth ere one of these fair lands—
My England's children—shall be stol'n or wrung
From the strong hand to which in weaker days it clung.

O lay me in the grave before that day
Sear these old eyeballs blind ! That thought of pain
Has killed all other. Bring me on my way,
My sons, to the old Senate. In my brain
The fire will blast me if my lips refrain ? ”
“ Nay, dearest Sire ! Thou art too weak to go.”
“ Sirs ! take me I command you ! Though it strain
My life to its last string, I’ll dare the blow !
And if my Country fall, let that stroke lay me low.”

Supported by these twain he tottered on
To his accustomed place. His every limb
Was racked with torture, but his strong soul shone
With zeal and courage that no pain could dim,
Nor adversary daunt. The heart of him
Is all a-blaze with vigour that belies
His gray hairs, and wan features that are grim
With valiant wrath in which all weakness dies,
And the soul’s flame burns clear—himself the sacrifice !

Behold, he rises ! stretches forth his hand
As when it grasped the thunderbolt of yore.
It trembles. Hark ! he speaks. The old command
Is gone. No ! Like a dying tempest’s roar
It swells with strength returning, and the floor
Quivers a moment with the memories dread
Of its past terror. Dauntless orator !
Conquering his age he rears his haughty head,
And from his eye the lightnings leap that his foes dreamed
were dead.

Alas ! tis all in vain. He stands alone.
Alone with failing strength. O'erpowered he falls
The vanquished hero of a cause o'erthrown.
But sharp as lightning from those storied walls
His injured Country darts reproach, and calls
Her champion to arise, avenge, and smite !
Swift to his feet he springs. Ha ! what appals
His mighty heart, fixes his freezing sight ?
A Mightier hath come down to see and close the fight.

For in that moment of proud agony
Glode up the chamber, with swift silent stride,
The ghastly Shadow that no eye can see
And keep untamed the lightning of its pride.
He saw, and staggered back. Grim Death, allied
With England's foes, shook high his dreadful dart.
The hero smote his o'er-charged bosom—sighed
The grief he could not speak—so keen its smart
For his fall'n country ; sank on her and broke his heart.

Just three-and-thirty ! Was Death Love or Hate
Of thee ? Heaven gives to few long life, but seeks
Of all true men to make a little great.
Days are to these as months, and moments weeks ;
Their years outrun the summer on their cheeks ;
Their hearts burn at white heat—so briefly burn.
'Tis well. The prudent over-care that ekes
Life out with miser thrift, has yet to learn
That they who hoard shall lose, who lose shall greater
earn.

Scarcely young Soldier hadst thou drawn thy sword
When Death sheathed it for ever. But thy hand
Outflew the envious Tyrant's grasp abhorred,
Carved out a kingdom for thy native Land ;
And as it fell Fame snatched the mighty brand
And graved thy name upon thy Country's heart ;
Where deep it stands and shall for ever stand
Immortal Wolfe ! When thou and Glory part
The Patriot's love and life shall be a perished Art.

Dark was the night, and darkly frowned the heights ;
And darkly on its way the river rolled ;
Save where gleamed dim the city's flickering lights,
Or pale star peeped through riven rain-cloud's fold.
All still ; save gurglings of the waters cold,
And the low night wind's moan. But hark ! A plash !
The sound of oars ! Nay, 'twas the tide that bowled
Its playful wavelets with a merrier dash !
Or winds that smote the truants with a heavier lash !

Close to the shore, with wary pace and slow,
The boats crept on, each with its silent freight ;
Nor spoke, nor sighed, scarce breathed they, lest the foe
Should sound the alarm, and to the city gate
Rouse all the heights, and like an avalanche straight
Down the steep cliffs be poured the leaden hail.
All's well ! No sign or sound ! How the boats grate,
Grinding upon the rocks ! Each board and nail
Seems straining all its strength to bruit abroad the tale.

Hark! hark! Whence came that sound that seemed to
bruise

The brain beyond the hollow of our ear?

Ear over-quick! too zealous spy whose news

Snatched green but grates the teeth! Away with fear!

To the cliff onward! and like mountain deer

Up its bald face leap, scramble, climb, grope, crawl,

No matter how, but up! and if ye hear,

Feel the hot grape storm down, cling to the wall

Face upward, and ne'er pause nor flinch, but mount or—
fall!

Ah! they have heard—the picket at the top!

And down the cheeks of the hard crags the fire

Tears like a hurricane. Ah, see! they drop!

Shot—in the face, brave men! But faster, higher

Their comrades climb, and as they mount, more dire

Burns their resolve to avenge the dead below.

One nears the top—another—others. “Fire!”

Now they are on it—level with the foe.

Run, flying French! tell Montcalm, England her first
blow.

Has struck! and that with shaking knees ye fled,

When rocks no longer stood between, like sheep

From the wild wolf, before the jackets red!

How calmly, radiantly o'er the deep

The day has broke! and lo! the illumined steep

Bristles with bayonets, and the river swarms

With battle-ships; and startled from her sleep

Quebec with war-calls shakes and wild alarms! [Arms.

While calm along the heights gleam, form the British

Wroth as a wild beast baited from his lair
The startled enemy, surprised and shamed,
Stalks from his stronghold, with a braggart air,
With all the passions of his race inflamed.
“Not in the Battle shall we be defamed,
By English cunning snared. Come, try our steel,
Thou crafty Fox!—a Lion falsely named!”
Swift his ranks form; and hark, the trumpets peal!
The foe! they come! they fire! Ha! see our Regiments
reel!

And *he*—he yonder, waving his bright blade
Before his men—has felt the iron ball
Gride through his valiant arm!—arm that was made
Where Nature makes her heroes, that may fall
But never faint, nor yield save at the call
Of Him who made them. Binding it to stay
The bloody stream, he strides on lithe and tall
As one who has but felt the freshening spray,
And to the billowing sea ploughs his deep, deepening
way.

“Down on your faces, Soldiers!” They are down—
A road of flesh for the advancing ranks
Pouring in darkening masses from the town
And spreading right and left upon our flanks,
Blocked in the centre in dense, thickening banks—
Ridges of steel from which leap to and fro
Spirits of Victory, while Death’s lean shanks
Rattle around us. On, on, comes the foe! [blow!”
But forty yards! and then—“Up Guards, and strike the

And they are up ! as if by magic art
Summoned ; and with a fire whose every ball
Hits the red centre of a foeman's heart
Which the sharp bayonet pierces ere he fall
So swiftly, simultaneously all
The regiments fire and charge, the ranks are riven,
Scattered and sunk as in a sudden squall
The red leaves tossed and whirled, are drifted, driven,—
Caught in the turbid waves and whelmed from earth and
heaven.

See Montcalm gallops through his broken lines
And rallies them once more to meet the shock !
“ Back to the charge, men ! See where Glory shines !
Better to fall than live the whole world's mock ! ”
The ranks close up. Again a solid block
Of angry steel rolls out : and a sharp shot
Bites through our Leader's veins. But like a rock
He stands ; waves, cheers ; as if each falling clot
Of blood had shot forth roots and bound him to the spot.

But see there ! Montcalm staggers, reels, and falls.
Brave Leader, worthy of a braver band !
It is enough. That sight his ranks appals—
Strong but in his transfused strength. They stand
Amazement filled, now horror-struck. Their hand
Fails with their heart. “ Now British troops, advance !
On to the charge—the last ! ” Ah, that Command !
Wherefore so faint its tone ? O dire mischance !
Hast thou then taken it—life for life—dis-Generalled
France ?

They saw it not—the hole bored in his breast—
He stood so firm, so valiant at their side.
They must not see it. “Hither! let me rest
Upon thy shoulder Comrade! for the tide
Is ebbing fast. Let me my weakness hide
From my brave men. They must not see me fall.”
Fond arms—too fond to obey—bear him aside.
Alas, there is no hope! The well-aimed ball
Has graved on his kind heart his last farewell to all!

Hark to the shout from all the plains that breaks!
Clear-ringing, well-known shout of “Victory!”
“They run! they run!” That joyous peal awakes
The hero from Death’s deepening sleep. His eye
Uncloses; his tongue loosens; with a sigh
He asks “Who run?” “The Foe!—retreating fast!”
“Thank God! Now I am happy! I can die!”
Then with a smile that tells all conflict past,
He turns upon his side, and calmly breathes his last.

Just three-and-thirty! Youths of England stop
Before this stone; and ponder well its story!
Thus did a youth fight, conquer, bleed, and drop
Into the jaws of Death, the arms of Glory,
The heart of England. When your heads are hoary,
Shall ye have followed him in love and duty,
Even at a distance? Mark that fair face gory!
And does not Life’s chief promised, golden booty
Pale in the glow of a young, dying Soldier’s beauty?

The shades were falling as I sat and gazed :
The high roof quivered in the dying light,
Sinking in depths of gloom that dimmed and razed,
Descending slowly, in dead seas of night
Arches, and columns, and the marbles white.
When suddenly the walls dissolved. And then
Dawned a fair vision on my tranced sight.
Lands stretched o'er boundless lands, and hosts of men
Countless, of every tribe, rose brightening on my ken.

And a hoarse sound, as when the ocean rolls,
Smote on my ears ; from North and South it came,
From East and West : from tropics and from poles
Shot tongues of fire, till Heaven was all aflame,
And the high blue shook with the vast acclaim.
And while I looked, one took a trump and blew
A deep and deafening blast that did proclaim
Freedom to all the world and Knowledge true.
Whereat the lightnings and the thunderings brighter,
louder grew.

And at that blast the tyrants of the earth
Fell prone ; their thrones crashed down, and both
Unlifted lay, unpitied. Rose up Worth
Throned in their stead and pledged her gentle troth
With Right, while all the People, nothing loth,
Dowered them with strength, and prayed for fair increase,
The multiplying and the sturdy growth
Of blessings only with the world to cease
The offspring of the Reign of everlasting Peace.

And the old East smoothed out her wrinkles deep,
And shook the dust of centuries from her head,
And the vile cerements of inglorious sleep,
And fetters whose foul rust had cankered
The fair round limbs, on which Heaven once had shed
The glow of Time's young morning. In her veins
The fire relit the lily-cinctured red
On her wan cheek ; and seizing his bright reins
She leaped to the Sun's side and swept the Western
plains.

And o'er the beauteous Lands where Freedom drew
Her earliest breath ; and, dying, made her grave
An altar on which all the ages through
The fire has burned unquenched ; and all the brave
Have lit their torch at it, and every slave
Thawed in its warmth his tyrant-frozen might—
O'er those dead climes rolled up the scarlet wave
Of wakening Freedom, and the Athenian height
Lit the dead eye of Greece once more—with lovelier
light.

And through the fettered North, its frost-bound lands
Ground to dead dust—dust not of men but ice—
The darkened brain, hearts frozen, withered hands
Of manhood, killed and crushed in the dread vice
Of one fierce Will that spared no sacrifice
To make its grip fast on the shivering world—
I saw a flame unrolled upon its skies ;
And when a hand snatched at that sign unfurled
A swift, red, hissing bolt shot forth, and it was hurled

Into the deep—that blood-bedabbled hand ;
And the huge bergs came rolling up those seas
And crushed it 'twixt their cavernous jaws ; its brand
Flamed but a moment ; for the icy breeze
Blew on it smothering snows : his breath did freeze—
The despot's very breath—as there he lay
Muttering with chattering teeth those dark decrees
Which erst transfixed each enemy his prey ;
Crushed by those forces now he had been wont to sway.

And the sweet South, a Bird of rainbow dyes
Soared with the gathering Eagles of the earth,
Swift, strong, majestic as whom northern skies
Had clothed with hues of storms that gave them birth.
And the black manacles that all her girth
Of land and flood had held in night of soul,
I heard them shivered, as her equal worth
She felt, sprang up, soared clear, defied control,
And screamed with wild delight that pierced the answering
Pole.

And all the West in a mild, mellow glow
Of long-accustomed and ripe glory lay :
As Evening's yellow plains of sky, where slow,
Like a contented Harvestman, the Day
Carries his golden sheaves ; and Heaven's steep way
Is covered o'er with heaps of skiey grain,
'Twixt which, in carelessly sublime array,
Rolls heavily the Sun's large, loaded Wain
Towards Time's great garner-gates, fire-leaved, that close
the plain.

Then said I, "Lo! the Summer of all Time
Hath come. The Harvest of the World draws near.
The West is ripe, and swiftly every clime
Takes the complexion of the mellowing year.
Soon like a ball of finest gold the sphere
Out of the fires of centuries will roll,
And in the stormless firmament crystal-clear
Will shine, from the Equator to the Pole,
A Perfect Orb, unspotted as the perfect Soul."

The Vision passed. Then I became aware
Of an old Minster; and in solemn mood
A band of Patriots gathered.¹⁹ And came there
A reverend man²⁰ who from a fabric rude
Brought scrolls and gave them to the multitude.
And lo! from 'neath the threshold issued clear
Two widening streams like that the Prophet viewed.
"O natal Place of Freedom, Knowledge dear!"
I cried. Then fell, and kissed its stones with love sincere.

CANTO THE FIFTH.

When Life was in its April I was fain
To roam the field, and wander through the dell,
Plucking the flowers that in smiles hid their pain
And died with odorous breath that scorned to tell
Of aught but life and beauty ; while the bell
Of some old Minster on my joy-quick ears
Chimed like a deeper note in the sweet spell
Of universal gladness, and Life's fears,
Like unhatched serpents slept, hid in those flowery years.

And e'en the Ruin, frowning on the waste,
With melancholy moanings to the winds
Bewailing its lost glory, stood embraced
In the gay gladness native to young minds
In the soul's morning sunshine steeped that blinds
To all but Joy and Hope :—the haggard Pile
Whose hollow skeleton of Decay reminds—
I plucked the wild flowers in its roofless aisle
And saw it melt—a dimple in young Nature's smile.

But now my days have sobered to the tint
Of thy grave beauty. Time has wrought in me
A kindred gloom, and Care has left the print
Of her defacing finger ; and in thee,
In all thou art, and hast been, and shalt be
My life-worn soul asylum finds. When glade
Has lost its wonted cool, and flower and tree
Their bloom and sweet, thy sympathetic shade
Falls on my heart like balm, and all its pangs are stayed.

Then welcome once again, ye peaceful Dead !
And ye soul-hallowing aisles ! Mortality
Hath here a salutary power ; no dread.
For opposite thoughts are ministered to me
In happy union. Now I bending see
The still, recumbent warriors ; now my eyes
Lift to the soaring Pile where Melody
Builds her a nest, and broods, and heavenly dyes
Stream down, and all seems mystic mingling with the skies.

Dejection finds no place, nor homeless Fear ;
Nor sense of Vanity hath power to oppress ;
The Presence that doth brood for ever here,
Awing away presumptuous worldliness,
Charms to repose each thought that would distress :
Life's real, full self steals on my wakening heart
Midst the retirement of this calm recess ;
The face divine in glare of street and mart
Seen but in vanishing glimpses—known there but in part.

For I read not these tombs as many do,
To whom they tell the world-old worn-out tale
Of vanity. The Sage in whose tired view
The charm of Life and Labour seemed to fail
By courses vain had marred the vision hale
Of his aspiring youth. To sickly taste
The manna on which true life thrives seems stale :
As self-whole Simon deemed the ointment waste
With which a self-sick soul her Saviour's feet embraced.

The rather gaze I on these reverend stones
As tablets, whereon angels drawn from bliss
By an immortal charm, grave o'er their bones
A grand reversal of those words of his—
" Substance of substances, all substance is
That true life hath or taketh 'neath the sun."
Vain life alone is Vanity. But this
That Goodness, Genius, Science, Art hath done
Rounds in the perfect Orb wherein all light grows one.

Nor let me rashly blame the taste that broke
The calm of these old aisles, the dead inspired
With thought and motion. 'Tis that man has woke
To Life's vast manifoldness, and the untired
Pursuit of its great objects that expired
Not with men's mortal breath. Unconsciously
Has Art proclaimed, with the grand out-burst fired,
" Life knows no break in its great history
Of Love, Hope, Purpose, Thought, and blest Activity."

Here Newton tracks the comet, weighs the sun ;
Here Watt sits perfecting his great designs ;
Here Wilberforce smiles on his triumph won ;
Wordsworth his meditative head declines ;
And with a courtly presence, that refines
E'en while we gaze, Shakespeare thought-burdened bends
His stately form o'er his prophetic lines,
For the grand trumpet listening that ends
The scene, and the Immortal with the mortal blends.

I gaze on these as Records of the Past,
And Symbols of the Present. Thus ye were,
And, in some kindred form, still are, though vast
Beyond all mortal measurement. The heir
Of your past toils, soul-opulent, ye share
By some unknown and unimagined might
The world's work still ; and from your stations there,
Through these lips life-like, with mute charm, invite
Your followers to a world where work is Love and Light.

It best consists perchance with Art that these
Should all repose in one unvarying calm ;
And doubtless weary men, tossed on Life's seas,
Seek of souls brought to haven the sweet balm
That breathes from folded hands, still feet ; the psalm
Of hearts glad for the quiet waves. But rife
Are souls with deeper yearnings ; for the palm
Of all-triumphant energy ; the strife
O higher powers ; and higher victories of Life.

'Tis not dead calm we want, but living Rest ;
The war of forces always triumph-crowned ;
Doubts light-speared ; and slain passions, in the breast
With apotheosis divine, around
The sovereign soul enthroned : Thought Reason-bound
With Truth's eternal halo,—a white saint
Whose work is worship ; midst melodious sound
Of inner, outer worlds, without restraint,
Pursuing infinite ends with powers that never faint.

So, in a higher correspondence found,
Midst manifold discordancy, has Art
Touched loftier notes ; and woven these walls around
Links with the ever-active mind and heart
That were and are ; while Death shows but the part
That clasps the leaves of Life's continuous Whole.
And these whose work he snapped with ruthless dart
Pursue their unattained but certain goal
In the eternal freedom of the perfect soul.

Hard by ye Statesmen, still reverberate
The voices of free men ; but yours have died
Into dim echoes. Pillars of the State,
Bowed, broken, here ye crumble side by side.
Bound in a national unity, more wide
Than party differences in which upgrows
The arch of Freedom that above their tide
Of ever-shifting power that ebbs and flows,
A nation's Highway makes whose key-stone is Repose.

Around your graves your England grows and thrives.
Yours, yet not yours. Ye would not know her now ;
She has outgrown the stature of your lives :
(Lands grow so swiftly that have leave to grow).
I am a fool of sense ! Swiftest is slow
To beings such as ye have risen to be !
Methinks your spirits all before her go,
The pilots of her progress, and, heaven-free,
Inspire her with their larger, lordlier liberty.

Who knows what streams of active influence
Flow from the hills beyond our mortal ken ?
Thoughts, feelings, through the flesh-veil, on our sense
Darted from viewless lives that once were men,
But now are more and mightier. Voice and pen
May oft obey an impulse from afar.
The spirit's tides uplift us now and then :
Who knows what orb approaches ? sees the star
Slide from the heights where all God's crowned Dominions
are ?

O human Power ! men call thee brief and vain,
Eluding all who seek thee. Judged by sense,
Brief, vain thou art. But what if thou remain—
Changed but in mode ? thy earthly channels, dense,
For a direct, pure, boundless influence ?—
A soul-force that requires no lower might ;
Burning its way by its own beam intense,
And shining on the world, a steadfast light,
While earthly meteors are quenched in lasting night.

Who would not be ambitious of such power,
The best gifts covet, and grow strong in soul ?
Of which strength worldly goods are but a dower
That dies with life's dissolving bond, while whole
In spiritual resources, and control
Of energies divine, earth-trained and taught,
But perfected at Heaven's all-crowning goal,
The spirit rays forth floods of impulse, thought,
And force by which a thousand glorious deeds are
wrought.

Call no man's power complete till he is dead ;
Till he has shaken off these swaddling bands
In which the young Immortal wraps his head.
For when the folded faculty expands
And he takes flight to the Immortal lands,
With ampler means he thence the toil resumes
That tutored his young strength. O shining hands,
Stretched out in myriads flashing at the looms
Of all the world ! O gathering clouds on clouds of plumes

That float unseen around us ! Ye blind races
That live by sight and touch, and nought believe
But the oft-lying sense ; the heavenly places
Are full of living creatures ; wheels that cleave,
And eyes that watch, and hands that work and weave,
And wings that fly—a countless, endless host !
O Land ! no more thy fallen chieftains grieve ;
They throng thee, govern, guard thee, ghost on ghost,
Most present and most powerful when forgotten most.

Some of you fell beneath the cares of State,
Death glorious as the warrior's on the field ;
Pierced by the shafts of obloquy and hate,
Because the sword of Truth ye dared to wield,
And mob or monarch challenge, with no shield
But a good conscience and a righteous Cause.
Heroes whose monuments are wrongs repealed,
Just liberties achieved and wholesome laws ;
While Slander's self stands dumb, or joins the world's
 applause.

O there are martyrs that no sword e'er smote
Nor smell of fire e'er passed on ! Patriots brave
Who fell to daggers that in breast or throat
Made not a scar ; who sank into the grave
Beneath the griefs that on self-seeking knave
Had fall'n innocuous. But on spirit great
In honour beat like poisonous blast. A slave
That kills its Liberator is a State :
He bears away its chains, but sinks beneath their weight.

All ages have their martyrs. The great Host
Is ever gathering, for Truth's ancient war
Is ever rolling on ; and there the most
Where most unseen, unheard. Her changing star
Is one fair light—one as her seers are
In whatsoever age, or land, or guise.
When from the world's throne she shall call from far
Her martyr-legions, they shall all arise
From the four winds—a blood-red Cross upon the skies.

Thou shalt come with them, slain by guiltless hands¹,
Pierced by the keen knife of the bright North Wind
On the pure altar-crown of all the lands,
Spotless of sin or blood ; where they that bind
Wound not, and in Aurora's flames entwined—
Fair, fireless flames—ascends the raptured soul,
While the cleansed, uncorrupting dead lies shrined
In diamond, and ceaseless dirges roll
Through all the white Cathedral of the silent Pole.

Chant on ye solemn choirs beneath the stars
Whose funeral tapers twinkle round his grave !
And tell the great lone land that lifts its bars
Against man's steps, this spirit was so brave,
Enamoured of him to your magic cave
Ye lured him—caught him in your silvern bands,
And fain had been each one his beauteous slave.
Alas ! ye knew not in your gleaming hands
A fatal fondness lay. Ye looked, and through your lands

Fled wailing, for the Life ye loved was not,
Nought but the semblance of the soul ye knew ;
And round your loveless, lone life's one dear spot
The walls of everlasting ice ye drew
Jealous that other eyes the place should view ;
And rallying every black-winged, death-eyed blast
To smite and wither each adventurous crew
That towards his tomb advanced the threatening mast
To end the vigils sweet in which your long nights passed.

Sleep on, brave Sailor ! They who keep the gates
Of the great City of the North mount guard
Over thy bones ; and round thy grave dilates
Its frost-piled pomp of dome and spire, all starred
With fairest sculpture, by no finger marred
Of Time and Tumult, such as man's work blight.
When his hath perished, these shall stand unscarred
With Heaven's perpetual re-chiselling bright,
And, like thy memory, immaculately white.

And when thou wakest from thy long, long sleep,
And the old world swims back upon thy view,
And thou shalt see all round the crystal deep,
And those high glittering pyramids of blue,
Thou shalt say, musing on their stainless hue,
" This is the City New Jerusalem ;
Its sea of glass fire-mingled ; gates where through
No soiled thing enters, each a pearly gem ;
And walls whose mingled light glows like a diadem."

Nor all false fancies. Earth's unsullied crown,
Spotless to-day as on Creation's morn,
The Jewelled North. The morning stars look down
And sing o'er her as when the world was born.
Earth's Virgin clime—White Rose without a thorn.
One Realm—O Grief that there should be but one !—
O'er which the Heavens have never bent to mourn ;
For though they hide so long the godlike Sun,
'Tis not in wrath for aught that she hath ever done.

O White Rose on the world's top blowing sweet !
Sole Relic now of Eden's purity,
Withdrawn to deserts where man's wandering feet
Come not, beneath a bleak and bitter sky ;
Thy last defence from fingers that would dye
Thy blossoms with the blackness of the dust,
And a carnation that would putrefy
Thy very snows ! What marvel thou hast thrust
From thy pure breast hands red with blood and black
with lust ?

O chaste white Bride, that in the arms of Night
Sleeping, dost make that Ethiop fair to see !
The pilgrim stars climb the world's topmost height
To gaze and dote on him for love of thee !
And, fairer grown for their captivity,
Round the clear-carven pillars of thy bed
They linger, loth to quit thy company,
Self-bound midst crag and berg that shivering shed
Their chains in sparkling showers of silver round thy
head.

Shine on fair Jewel ! taking Heaven's blue eye
On the World's forehead ; for whose gentle sake
She smooths her rugged frown, till her sharp sky
Smiles tenderly on living hill and lake
And drops in healing tears her melting flake.
Still, high priest ! wear thy mitre, snow-impearled,
Standing alone where none may look, and break
The tempests that across thy forehead hurled
Drop at thy feet, dissolve in dews that bless the world.

Behold thy white-winged cherubim uplift
'Neath the cold stars their glittering sword of ice !
And from the whirling, wildering, whitening drift
Their faces frown forth on each bold device
To enter their unsullied Paradise.
When God shall say "Lo, I make all things new !"
Thou, needing no fierce flame of sacrifice,
Shalt stretch thy hands forth from thy Norland blue
And Man and Summer hand in hand shall march thy
Eden through.

But thou, heroic Sailor ! sleeping there
Where no man knoweth of thy sepulchre,
And no dear hands can ever come to bear
Or wreath or flower, nor pensive Wanderer
To muse ; but solemn silence broods that stir
Of human life ne'er breaks, thy sleep is sweet.
'Neath England's greenest sod not sweeter 'twere,
With marble at thy head, flowers at thy feet— [sheet ?
God's flowers. O joy ! Are not God's snows thy winding

And what fair hands, with gentler, softer finger
Had wound thy shroud around thee, dropped the mould
More reverently upon thee, or could linger
So long or lovingly, as they who fold
On fold enwrap thee, strewed white blooms ; while rolled
By the strong squadrons of the blast, the rock
Of massive ice, sealed by eternal cold,
Shut in thy bones ? When the last earthquake's shock
Shall shatter all the white walls of the North, thy flock,

Thou at their head, guided by angel-host
Shall pass—a radiant band—across those snows
To their desired haven. But no Frost
Fetters thy soul, nor theirs. In sweet repose
Thou long hast dwelt. And she—thy wife—she knows
The worst—the best : and from thy side looks down
On all that fearful road where no man goes ;
And musing on thy height in Heaven's renown,
Blesses the dark, bright Doom that wove thy martyr's
crown.

And thou that other martyr !* slain by shaft
Of the bright Sun-bow where Protean Death
Grips not with fingers gaunt the jewelled haft
Of dagger sharpened in the north wind's breath ;
But his Pale Horse (how pale where wandereth
The moonless mist !) yokes with the sun-god's team
And all the swooning air encompasseth
With vapours from those nostrils wide that stream,
A subtle poison mixed with Summer's goldening beam.

Explorer of those other lands unknown,
Round which the Dragon lays his length of mail,
Lit with the torrid terror of a zone
Against whose gates no stranger might prevail
To lift the sacred Nile's mysterious veil.
But thou didst pass. The Dragon huge that lay
Around the mountain-barricaded pale,
His sleepless eyes turned on thee, but to slay
Forgot, love-bound. And travelling on thy lonesome way,

Behold a garden of the Hesperides !
With singing nymphs, and apples of fair gold
Fruiting upon innumerable trees ;
And lakes, and streams, and waterfalls that rolled
From virgin mountains, and through valleys old
With the rich loveliness of unreaped Time.
While from those heights thou saw'st the land unfold
Its buds of promise in the golden prime,
And the world entering in and basking in its clime.

For He who led the Seer up Nebo's height,
And shewed him all the glory of the Land,
Gives all His Leaders that prophetic sight ;
Th' advanced Guard of the World, He bids them stand
Upon the Mount of Vision, while His Hand
Draws back the Veil and shews the Victor Race
No longer toiling through the barren sand,
But resting in a wide and wealthy place
Whose Glory, like God's smile, lights up their dying face.

For this is all they seek—to see the bliss
Which they shall never share : no thought they know
Of rest or recompense, no hope but this
That in some distant time, when all their woe
And wanderings are forgot, the seed they sow
In tears and darkness o'er their graves shall rise.
Enough for them the world's far harvest glow :
Nor other vision fills their closing eyes
Than the dear Earth arrayed in beauty of the skies.

O Happiness ! Thou Being heavenly-bright,
That men have sought since Eden saw thee fly
Beckoning the sworded Cherubim and Night,
With Innocence re-ascending to the sky,
Amidst the amaranthine fields to lie,
Far from a world unworthy of thy grace—
Thou didst return when God came down to die,
And all who walk in Calvary's holy Place
Bearing the Cross He bore behold again thy face.

Hark ! 'midst the roar of thy monotonous sea,
Thou myriad-peopled City, breaks a cry
That o'er thy babbling waves of vanity
Swells like a clarion's summons clear and high !
Give heed to it. No trumpet from the sky
By the apocalyptic angels blown
Brings message to thy halls of Luxury
More worthy of thine ear. "Thou hast not known
The way of Peace. 'Tis in the path of sacrifice alone."

Forth to the wilderness we go to see
Whence comes the voice that starts us from our ease.
Nought find we but a lonely traveller, free
From lust of gain or power as the pure breeze
That sweeps the gold-ored mountains, or the seas
That o'er their beds of jewels heedless roar ;—
A brave explorer who has turned from these
Broad, vulgar, century-beaten tracks to explore
The good old path to Heaven that martyrs trod of yore.

Lost path that needs to be explored anew,
The way that winds up Calvary's rugged steep—
Earth's Monarch-Mountain from whose top the view
Is ever clear, and all Heaven's crystal deep
Sparkles like diamond, and eyes that weep
Gazing forget their tears. These are the heights
Delectable : the Beulah lands where sleep
The souls God loveth, and the calm, still nights
Are beauteous with the near Heaven's everlasting lights.

O joy divine, that God's brave martyrs claim !
Theirs is the stone that turneth all to gold,
The white stone with the golden city's name,
Which the beloved seer received of old,
And lo ! the barren rock and waters cold,
Wove by the glory of no earthly sun,
Around him grew a brilliance manifold,
Till Earth and Heaven, like warp and woof, were spun
Into a splendour indistinguishably one.

And all the strange-faced hills and strange-tongued streams
Where thou didst wander, homeless, self-exiled,
Broke round thy footsteps in celestial beams,
Till savage beasts and men, and Nature wild
Were but a veil through which God looked and smiled.
And in the mirror of thy peaceful mind
A glory grew that all thy pains beguiled,
Till Heaven and Home and God were words combined
In one sweet knot of bliss inextricably twined—

A threefold cord of perfect blessedness,
That all our looms of Pleasure cannot give.
Tossing in thy luxurious distress,
O London ! learn of this lone man to live.
He is the world's heir, thou its fugitive.
He is Joy's master, and thou Sorrow's slave.
Nor shall ye find—ye souls who seek and strive—
This unsought boon, although in Mammon's cave
Ye dig and dig till ye have digged down to your grave.

A sacred reverence binds me to this place.
O Livingstone, thou mighty man of God !
A braver son ne'er sprang of Britain's race ;
None greater Israel's holy acres trod.
Endowed with no divine, miraculous rod
In days of drought thy fever to assuage,
Thou took'st through Afric's unknown, burning sod
A lone and undefended pilgrimage.
O man miraculous in unmiraculous age !

Whether is greater to go forth with power
Of rod or mantle to the wilderness ;
Or with no weapon for the evil hour
Nor consolation for its sure distress,
Of supernatural promise of success ?
Nought seeing but the work to be begun ;
Nought feeling but calm Duty's still caress ;
No sign of luminous cloud, cleft rock, stayed sun,
Nought but the struggling hope of God's far-off
“ Well done.”

O mighty Faith ! O Courage excellent !
Devotion above pain, or death, or fear !
The glorious ones of old have round thee bent
And welcomed thee to their immortal sphere,
“ Behold a greater than our greatest here ! ”
This is the better thing God doth provide,
The miracle that grows more bright, more clear
As times wax dull and cold ; that doth abide
The living witness of a Power whose carnal signs have died.

O later Faith ! that soars above the need
Of tokens, to the Invisible who did shew
Himself to men aforetime that their seed,
Denied that privilege, might the greater know
Of Faith that asks no sign, and Christ bestow
On them His benediction last and best—
“ Blessed were they who saw my works below,
But ye more truly, spiritually blest
Who see not, yet believe, and in my yoke find rest.”

Thou found'st it. And the deeper rest hast found.
Peace to thee, weary soul ! Thy sleep be sweet !
Soft lie thy head ! Thou sleep'st in English ground.
Didst thou not feel her dear soil kiss thy feet ?
Brave feet ! that never more shall burn and beat
With pain of travel ; never more shall roam
From England's Temple where her brave hearts meet
And mingle and grow one. Soft be the loam
Beneath thy head—soft with the dear, sweet love of home.

Did not our hearts throb when thy words we heard
"I'm going home," and knew there was no more
A home for thee on Earth ? Were we not stirred
To all our depths of tears when he that bore
Thy Dust, brave follower ! to its native shore,
Told us of all thy helplessness and pain ?
Fain had we rolled the months back and flown o'er
The land and sea to soothe thy burning brain,
And bless thee with the love our lips now breathe in vain.

One way is left—to bless the land which thou
Didst live and die to bless. For thy dear sake
To bless it with fair Freedom. Even now
Thy prayer goes up "Whatever land shall break
The bondsman's chain, Heaven bless that land !"³ O make
Thy vow, great England, o'er these ashes brave
That prayer's fulfilment in thy hands to take !
Till, in this gloom descending, on his grave
An angel shall record, "Earth holds no more a slave"

Who cometh to invade our ancient rest
Making the solid ground to crack and yawn ?⁴
Whence art thou ? Speak ! thou huge, colossal guest
Into our guarded circle proudly drawn !
This, this is he who brings the welcome dawn
Of a new era to a world war-worn !
Your days, ye knightly warriors ! are gone ;
Your helmets rust ; your banners faded, torn,
Drop, shred by shred, and vanish like the times they
mourn.—

Times in a lower nobleness complete ;
But from whose bloom unfolds the nobler fruit
That, ever ripening, at a nation's feet
Drops in perennial plenitude ; with root
That puts forth year by year some fairer shoot,
To twine new laurels for the brow of Peace—
Victories that lift men further from the brute
And the true Sovereignty of man increase—
Kingdom of Mind that fades not when all Kingdoms cease.

The age of Bloodshed draweth to its close ;
The Battle-fever rageth at its height ;
The Demon that the world possesses knows
His time is short, and, therefore, in despite
He tears his victim with his fiercest might.
Hark ! a dear footstep up the world is stealing.
The unclean spirit spreads his wings for flight.
And see ! the worn and wounded world is kneeling
Beneath the wounded Hands in which it finds its healing.

O Peace, thou earliest, latest gift of Heaven !
Thou Dove that o'er the warring waves didst brood
In the world's morning ; and in her fair even
Shalt come again and still the direr feud
Of warring nations, and the world include
In one dear law of love, O haste thy flight !
Over these crimson seas of battle rude
Bless with thy silver wings our aching sight,
And fold us all to rest beneath thy bosom white.

Blest Age ! when nations shall learn war no more
Needing no more its lessons ; perfect made
In strength of self-restraint, and Freedom's lore ;
Taught hitherto by the keen battle blade
And the imperious cannon, and betrayed
To weakness and decay by gentler rule.
Thy sons outgrown the austere, barbarous aid
Of scourge and rod shall cry, " O world, thou fool
And slow of heart to need so long so harsh a school !"

Then shall Earth grow in Knowledge as the morn
Ripens to noon ; and Knowledge shall become
The Bride of Love, and beauteous things be born
For Service and Adornment ; and the Sum
Of Life be Good : and every lip be dumb,
And hand be impotent, save those that bless
And those that serve. And the foul Past, like scum
From living waters, clear ; and man possess
A bright, broad, heaven-reflecting sea of happiness.

O happy men, who labour for that day
And bring its rising nearer ! Blest above
All other labourers for the world are they !
Their hands are full of gifts, their hearts of love ;
Their gains are blessings, nor do they improve
In mind or in estate but to increase
Comfort or power of others. O remove
Thy crown, blood-rubied War ! The works of Peace
Are nobler Victories. Like God's, they ne'er shall cease.

Such deeds were thine, Watt ! deeds that bless and bind ;
That lighten labour, lessen pain, and make
The world an ampler home for all mankind ;
That Nature's long-crushed energies awake
To toil in painless service for our sake,
Ours, and God's dear, dumb creatures long-opprest ;—
I hear their new-found voices round thee break
In songs of hope, and freedom unrepressed,
The prelude of the Jubilee of Nature's rest.

And thou, old Abbey ! that hast shrined *their* dust—
The flower of the prime valour of the Earth ;
Shalt in the fairer future take in trust
The bones and fame of men whose gentle worth
Shall bring to higher, and yet higher birth
This travailing world. Shout blessed Fane and sing !
Thy brightest harvests are to come. No dearth
Shall fall on thee. But nobler times shall bring
A race of nobler name than crowns thy noblest King !

O ye, their firstfruits ! good and gracious hearts
That knew no note of war, in many a sheaf
Here garnered, ripe in the dear, precious arts
Of Peace, by her presented to her Chief,
The Prince of Peace. His altars bless you ! Brief
His life that hates you, be ! Your memories
Bloom by Time's river with a fadeless leaf ;
And many a soul, born beneath gentler skies,
Shall walk in your kind shade and lift adoring eyes

To the dear Power that in a stormier time
Gave you for earnest of the Rest to be :
And the fulfilling, universal chime
Of the Earth's everlasting Harmony
Drew from your hearts prophetic, as the sea
Its music from the shell, in the world's ear
Breathing the distant Love whose melody
Grew ampler, mightier, truer and more dear
As Heaven to Earth descending brought its music near.

And thou the latest comer to their rest,
Lady Augusta Stanley ! but not least
Among these nobler dead. Belovèd Guest !
None e'er more welcome here. And now released
From Martha's cares, with Mary at the feast
Of Virgin souls in contemplation sweet
Abiding, till the saintly, sorrowing Priest,
Thy husband, come at evening thee to meet
And hand in hand ye fall and kiss the Master's feet.

Deem it no rude intrusion on that rest
That I this song lay on thy honoured bed.
For 'mong the hands of Friendship's claim possest
Strange fingers have been here, and round thy head
Wove tender wreaths that Love's dear fragrance shed.
Unknown yet not unsweet their meek regret.
But thou beheld'st them all-beholding dead !
And if an earthly tribute move thee yet
May theirs, and this poor strain some gentle joy beget.

No title mine thy private worth to sing
To whom the vision of it ne'er was given.
But public worth for beggar and for king
Shines equally ; and none have ever striven
More truly, though perchance some may have thriven
More largely in men's eyes, this House to bless,
And bless the world and lift it nearer Heaven.
Thy light rayed forth in silent gentleness
That only prayed Heaven's light to grow and make *it* less.

Not more devoted good Queen Maud than thou
To this dear House of Prayer. Only *thy* zeal
Was mated to high Knowledge, and *thy* vow
Witnessed by large-souled Love that longed to heal
The Feuds of Faith, and show her one-ness real
Midst this great Babel of conflicting Mind.
But most the historic Saviour to reveal
So clearly, truly, liberally defined
That Wise men from the West might see his Star, and find

A Ground for Faith, a Way to Truth and God ;
And lose alike from burdened mind and breast
The load 'neath which their stumbling feet have trod
Doubt's lengthening way, glad at His feet to rest
From wearying Thought, and Love so long suppressed,
But deeper, richer, purer for Delay—
The World's last crown, her oldest, brightest, best,
Deferred by hands that must all claims assay
And proving His—ages of hoarded worship pay.

Thy Royal Mistress knew thy skilful love
When Life's great Sorrow broke her Woman's heart.
And many a lowly sufferer's soul shall prove
The same dear love, and grateful tears shall start
In dim eyes, as soft hands, in that same art
Of soothing trained, recall thy vanished care
That made provision, ere thou didst depart,*
For other comforters the load to bear
Of hearts that but for thee had broken with despair.

Sleep, gentle Lady! Round thy Grave thy deeds
Gathered and gathering follow thee to rest.
And from the skies a Sacred Hand that bleeds
Touches them as they enter, and lo! drest
In light they all thy radiant form invest :
As thou, with these, all souls, their trains with them,
Surround the Form whose Light all manifest.
Thy praises, that no evil tongues condemn,
Swelling God's praise—thy choir in New Jerusalem.

But now farewell! My hallowed task is done.
I would 'twere yet to do. A toil so sweet—
As sweet as sacred—ended, leaves in one
The pain of a lost joy. O that complete
My Song were as my love of thee blest Fane! My feet
Shall often bring me hither to renew
In silent thought this growing joy. Retreat
Familiar from my youth! Not strange nor new
Thy face, that thought, that bliss—a love that with me
grew,

And now at length has blossomed into song,
As one of my most inner native feelings,
That with a dumb delight possessed me long,
Ere I had found the voice whose sweet revealings
Break up the pained heart's depths with gracious healings.
Was I not born beneath thy blessed shade ?
Nor marvel thou at all thy fond appealings,
Since she who bare me, dying, near was laid,
And my lone youth was cheered as here I sorrowing
 strayed.

Thy grand historic splendour fadeth now
(Or brighten doth it ?) in the tender light
Of a domestic beauty—the mild glow
Of dawning life and love. Oh far too bright
To dwell in are thy glories ! My pained sight
Seeks sweet relief and rest in these soft gleams
That silver thee from home. Till the long night
Closes around me, may thy sacred beams
Hallow the memory of Childhood's peaceful dreams.

And hallow thou my life and make it fair
With the pure influence thou didst impart
To my young soul, when, at thy hour of prayer
I sought of Heaven to make me pure in heart,
And teach me how to choose the better part.
Alas ! I need to learn it all again.
The world has stol'n away with evil art
Much that I knew so well. O break her chain !
Nor let thy early blessing have been breathed in vain.

And bless thou eyes and hearts when I am gone :
And, far away whence thy dear towers dim-seen
Hang cloud-like in the sky at eve or dawn,
I sleep beneath the mound of nameless green
That hath forgotten I have ever been.
Enjoy thy long, long years ! Live on and shine
With holier ray, more heavenly and serene !
Thou hast in this great Realm a Place Divine,
And worthier work than this poor lay or life of mine.

THE END.

CANTO THE FIRST.

Note 1.

Who cometh yonder, borne with stately tread?
Edward the Confessor.

Note 2.

A royal crown upon his Kingly head.

All our early Sovereigns were carried to the grave arrayed in their royal robes, their crowns upon their heads, and exposed to the gaze of the people.

Note 3.

His cheeks like skies that hold the sunset glow.

"In person Edward was tall and well-made; his hair and skin were remarkably white, his complexion rosy."—*Turner's Anglo-Saxons*, vol. ii, p. 371.

Note 4.

Here, where I stand, the Norman Conqueror stood.
Crowned December 25, 1066.

Note 5.

Hide with the bloody rag yon royal face.
Harold, slain in the Battle of Hastings, October 14, 1066.

Note 6.

For see! The moon searching the red-hilled sod.
"At dusk the English broke up, and dispersed through the wood. The Normans followed their track by the light of the moon."—*Lingard*.

Note 7.

No proud invader could that spirit quell.
For the attempts to root out the language, laws, and entire genius of the Anglo-Saxon race, see any history of the times.

Note 8.

With reverent steps approach this chair of oak.

The coronation chair constructed by command of Edward I, for the reception of the Stone of Scone. In this chair all our sovereigns, from Edward I. to Victoria, have been crowned.

Note 9.

And the rough stone beneath from clime to clime.

The coronation stone of the Kings of Scotland, captured by Edward I.

Note 10.

On it the dying saint, Columba, lay.

"Of all explanations, the most probable is that which identifies it with the stony pillow on which Columba rested, and on which his dying head was laid in his Abbey of Iona."—*Dean Stanley's Memorials of Westminster.*

Note 11.

And far-off Scottish Kings were lifted to their sway.

The kings of Scotland were placed upon it by the Earls of Fife.

Note 12.

Here let it lie—born of old Scotland's rocks.

"Wherever else it may have strayed, there need be no question, at least, of its Scottish origin. Its geological formation is that of the sandstone of the western coasts of Scotland."—*Dean Stanley's Memorials.*

Note 13.

King Edward's son unkingly.

Edward II., the first sovereign crowned on this chair and stone, February 25, 1308.

Note 14.

As climbs the grandson to the vacant chair.

Edward III. Crowned February 1, 1327.

Note 15.

Rise glorious o'er the sea—brave sire and braver son.

Edward III. and Edward the Black Prince.

Note 16.

(Alas! prophetic of his noon's eclipse.)

Died 1376, aged 46.

Note 17.

In the Cathedral of fair Kent

Buried in Canterbury Cathedral.

Note 18.

Unworthy of such sire—so bright a memory.
Richard II., son of the Black Prince, crowned July 16, 1377.

Note 19.

And now, behold, the Rose of Lancaster.
Henry IV., crowned October 13, 1399.

Note 20.

While from its root springs forth a brilliant one.
Henry V., crowned April 9, 1418.

Note 21.

And prophesies the Rose of Lancaster full-blown.
See Stanza xix., Canto the Second.

Note 22.

And now the child * * * *
Henry VI., crowned November 6, 1429, aged 9 years.

Note 23.

* * * * Whose sad and sober eyes.
He sat "beholding all the people about sadly and wisely."—Taylor.

Note 24.

And now the York Rose * * * *
Edward IV., crowned June 29, 1461.

Note 25.

Must add the assassin's dagger to its right.
Henry VI., murdered by Richard in the Tower.

Note 26.

If thou *could'st* look! He stabbed thy Rival's heir.
Edward, son of Henry VI., was taken prisoner at the fatal battle of Tewkesbury, and murdered by his uncles, York and Gloucester.

Note 27.

And yonder smothers thine—thy sleeping, princely pair.
Edward V. and Duke of York smothered in the Tower.

Note 28.

And thine alone, of all the royal race.
Edward V.

Note 29.

Goes to his grave unsceptred, and uncrowned.

"He sat uncrowned, without sceptre or ball,"—*Speed*, p. 109.

Note 30.

The banquet is preparing. * * *

"All was prepared for the coronation of Edward V.; wild fowl for the banquet and dresses for the guests."—*Dean Stanley, from the Archives preserved in the Abbey.*

Note 31.

The Murderer! Who? He wears thy crown! Richard? 'Tis he.
Richard III., crowned July 6, 1483.

Note 32.

But hark! The thunders roll on Bosworth's plain.
The Battle of Bosworth Field.

Note 33.

Hail, Richmond! King! * * *
Henry VII.

Note 34.

Thunders thy challenge to the applauding sky.

An allusion to the office of champion, whose duty it was to make the challenge at the coronation.

Note 35.

Take from his head, ye warriors, take his plume.

"Richard was the second (English monarch) who fought in his crown. Falling off in his last fiery struggle, (it) was taken up by a private soldier, who contrived to secrete it in a bush in the field; but, being discovered, it was delivered to Sir Reginald Bray: hence arises the device of a crown in a hawthorn bush at each end of Henry's tomb in Westminster Abbey. When the pursuit was over, Bray delivered the battered crown to Lord Stanley, who placed it on Henry's head, hailed him king, and, as usual, sung *Te Deum*, and taught the soldiers to huzza the rural monarch with "Long live King Henry!" This was performed upon a hill near Stoke, from thence called Crown Hill."—*Hutton's Battle of Bosworth Field*, p. 132.

Note 36.

While bright, invisible hands the unction pour.

An allusion to the anointing at coronations.

Note 37.

His canopy the Battle's purple gloom.

An allusion to the canopy held over the Sovereign's head by four Knights of the Garter.

Note 38.

Here sanctify the oath which there ye swore.

Crowned, October 30, 1485. This coronation, however, was very meagre as a spectacle, the king evidently regarding the prior coronation on Bosworth Field as the real one.

Note 39.

Mingle their beauty in one Princely Flower.

Henry VIII. crowned June 24, 1509.

Note 40.

Their mingling honours where strife hath no power.

Elizabeth of York buried in the Abbey, February 25, 1503. Henry VII., buried May 9, 1509.

Note 41.

Another Edward * * * *

Edward VI., crowned February 20th, 1546, aged 9 years.

Note 42.

And for his sake with death was reconciled.

Jane Seymour.

Note 43.

Rise up, thou Queen * * * *

Mary, crowned October 1, 1553.

Note 44.

Set Spain on high, and fling thine England at her feet.

Married to Philip of Spain.

Note 45.

For, see! a mightier hand is on tify Bride!

Died 1558.

Note 46.

Perish the heart, fair Queen, that looks unmoved on thee.

Elizabeth. Crowned January 15, 1559.

Note 47.

Empress "from Orcaes to Pyrenee."

Proclaimed "Empress from the Orcaes Isles unto the Mountains Pyrenee."—*Strickland*. It is somewhat singular that the title of Empress should now be revived, and bestowed on our present Sovereign, Queen Victoria.

Note 48.

Of her I hear melodious Spenser sing.

"In the Faery Queene I mean *Glory* in my general intention, but in my particular I conceive the most excellent and glorious person of our Sovereaine *the Queene* and her kingdom in *Faery Land*. And yet in some places else I do otherwise shadow her. For considering she beareth two persons, the one of a most Royal Queene or Empress, the other of a most virtuous and beautiful lady, this latter part in some places I do express in *Belphebe*."—*Letter from Edmund Spenser to Sir Walter Raleigh*.

To the Most High, Mighty, and Magnificent Empress Elizabeth, &c., &c.—*Spenser's Dedication of the Faerie Queene*.

Note 49.

And Shakespeare marks her, from sweet Avon's vale.

Midsummer Night's Dream, Act ii., Scene 2.

Note 50.

And snow-white plume, she rides before her host.

Elizabeth at Tilbury.

Note 51.

Bright rose the day, and every eye was bright.

The coronation of Queen Victoria, June 28, 1838.

Note 52.

While thunder-throated cannons' loud acclaim.

"The ceremonies of the day commenced by the firing of a royal salute at sunrise by twelve pieces of artillery stationed within the enclosure of St. James's Park."—*Gentleman's Magazine*, August, 1838.

Note 53.

Uplift her to the Throne, ye Ministers.

As a matter of fact, the Crowning comes before the Enthroning; but I have not attempted in this stanza to follow the ceremonial in precise order. Those who are curious in such matters may find a complete account in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for August, 1838.

CANTO THE SECOND.

Note 1.

Successors to his labour and despair.

Eccles ii., 11.

Note 2.

The palace stood by the sepulchral dome.

"The ancient palace adjoined the Monastery, and the King's entrance to the Abbey Church was by a door at Poets' Corner."—*Walcot's Memo-rials of Westminster*.

Note 3.

Beside his hearth each king lay slumbering.

I am indebted for this reflection to Dean Stanley, in whose *Memo-rials of Westminster* the difference in this respect between English monarchs and those of other nations is admirably portrayed.

Note 4.

Who can forget thy words, fair Eleanor?

Eleanor of Castille, Queen of Edward I.

Note 5.

Thou took'st in thine thy aged father's hand.

Henry III., father of her husband.

Note 6.

His battle toils to share, his wounds to lave.

The tradition will be quite familiar to the reader of her saving his life by sucking the wound which he had received from the Infidel's poisoned dagger.

Note 7.

Witness, thou tomb of Edward, Royal Knight.

Edward I., husband of Eleanor.

Note 8.

And thine, great Warrior of Cressy's field.

Edward III.

Note 9.

And thou deep-dented helm that didst "affright
The air at Agincourt," and blazoned shield.

In the chantry, above the tomb of Henry V., are suspended these memorials of the Battle of Agincourt.

Note 10.

In the full moon * * * * *

"Both armies became fully revealed to each other as the stormy rain, withdrawing, allowed the moon to ascend to her unclouded zenith."—*Sharon Turner*.

Note 11.

And laughing with proud scorn upon the battle nigh.

"The night was cold, dark and rainy; but numerous fires illumined the horizon, and bursts of laughter and merriment were repeatedly heard from the French lines.....No one suspected the possibility of defeat."—*Lingard*.

Note 12.

And yonder sun shall set on England's perished sway.

"Their leaders planted their flags, amid loud exclamations of anticipated triumph.....on the spot over which the English would be compelled to pass on the next day, in their march to Calais."—*Sharon Turner.*

Note 13.

Towered high; half-buried in the sheaves of quivering grain.

"The mingled masses of the overthrown, living and dead, exceeded the height of a human figure, and became a fleshly fortification to the English, who, at first from behind it, and afterwards upon it, directed all their weapons."—*Ibid.*

Note 14.

A kingly pattern to a king's command.

"The king (Henry V.) was everywhere the foremost, daring every peril."—*Ibid.*

Note 15.

Braving the fierce Alençon's ponderous brand.

"The king's life was repeatedly in imminent danger.....He was charged by a band of eighteen French knights, who had bound themselves to each other to kill him. One of them, with a stroke of his mace, brought the king on his knees.....At length the Duke of Alençon, the French commander, fought his way to the royal standard. With one stroke he beat the Duke of York to the ground, and with a second, battered the crown on the king's helmet."—*Ibid.*

Note 16.

Than England wept for his untimely doom.

Died at the age of 34.

Note 17.

On towering car his effigy of gold.

The first occasion on which the effigy of the sovereign had superseded the exhibition of the corpse to the people.

Note 18.

To see the place where their victorious lord was laid.

His three chargers followed him, being led up the nave to the steps of the altar.

Note 19.

* * * * *
Our grand old flag? Dipped he to Spain

James I.

Note 20.

Quenching our bravest heart, our brightest brain
Upon the scaffold?

Sir Walter Raleigh.

Note 21.

So Edward shines thy fame.

Edward VI.

Note 22.

How eloquently Heaven proclaims its law.

Lev. xix. 18; Matt. xxii. 39.

Note 23.

Beneath this tomb? Only a coffin parts.

Mary and Elizabeth both sleep in the same tomb—the coffin of Elizabeth resting upon that of Mary.

Note 24.

But what strange fate has brought thee here, thou Scot?

In the same chapel with Elizabeth's stands the tomb of Mary Queen of Scots.

Note 25.

Was summoned from its bloody grave? * * *

Removed from Peterborough Cathedral by command of James I.

Note 26.

Set among England's sovereigns? * * *

"Wee think it appertaynes to the duty wee owe to our dearest mother, that like honor should be done to her body, and like monument be extant to her as to others, hers and our progenitors.... We have commanded a memoriall of her to be made in our church of Westminster, the place where the kings and queens of this realme are usually interred."—*Extract from Letter of James I., to the Dean of Peterborough.*

Note 27.

But lo! hard by a gem of purer ray.

Margaret, Countess of Richmond. The "Venerable Margaret" of Gray's Installation Ode.

Note 28.

The Duchess of Suffolk, Mother of Lady Jane Grey.

Note 29.

Henry Plantagenet * * *

Henry III., builder of the present Abbey.

Note 30.

By thee and thine upborne in sweet humility.

"The bier is placed on the shoulders of Henry himself, his brother Richard (King of the Romans), his two sons, Edward (afterwards King of England), and Edmund the Earl of Wareham and Lord Philip Bassett. On the shoulders of this royal and distinguished band the glittering chest is borne aloft, and the gay procession moves forward."—*Ridgway's Gem of Thorney Island*, p. 80.

Note 31.

His sumptuous offering in this chapel fair.

Chapel of Henry VII.

CANTO THE THIRD.

Note 1.

Seems bursting its stone lips with Immortality.

So many writers who have visited the Abbey seem oppressed with a sense of death and decay, and to succumb to the impression it creates of the *vanity* of human life and greatness.

Note 2.

Who can remember thee, thou marvellous Mind?

Sir Isaac Newton.

Note 3.

Thou, Handel * * * * *

Buried in Poets' Corner.

Note 4.

Thy marvellous song caught from too fine a sphere
For their dull sense.

"The Messiah" was as ill attended as received in the capital of the Empire, when first produced in 1741.

Note 5.

Prophet * * * * *

"Elijah."

Note 6.

* * Deliverer * * * * *

Moses, in "Israel in Egypt."

Note 7.

The Word and Vision of the King Supreme.

"The Messiah."

Note 8.

As when it breathed the tender words He said.
Come unto him all ye that labour, &c.

Note 9.

Or faltered 'neath His Cross * * *
He was despised and rejected of men, &c.

Note 10.

* * * Or sobbed around Him dead.
He was cut off out of the land of the living, &c.

Note 11.

Peal after peal, through all the bright ascent.
Lift up your heads, O ye gates, &c.

Note 12.

The counter blast—a myriad peals long pent.
Who is the King of Glory, &c.

Note 13.

Burst its tempestuous heart * * *
The Lord of Hosts, He is the King of Glory.

Note 14.

This day have I begotten Thee, my Son.
Unto which of the angels said He, &c.

Note 15.

Cry, "All the Angels praise Thee, Well-Beloved One."
Let all the angels of God worship Him.

Note 16.

Heard'st the word fall—a star shot from the Throne.
The Lord gave the word.

Note 17.

Heard'st the loud stir of a great Company.
Great was the Company of the Preachers.

Note 18.

Saw'st their bright feet on Salem's mountain zone.
How beautiful are the feet, &c.

Note 19.

And heard'st their sound go out to lands and tongues unknown.
Their sound is gone out, &c.

Note 20.

And heard'st the raging of the heathen sea.
Why do the nations, &c.

Note 21.

The chorus of its clamour, risen in wrath.
Let us break their bonds asunder, &c.

Note 22.

Before His awful laugh * * * *
He that dwelleth in Heaven, &c.

Note 23.

Dashed like a vessel which the potter hath
Broken in pieces.
Thou shalt break them, &c.

Note 24.

* * * * heard'st the anthem burst.
Hallelujah chorus.

Note 25.

Sweeping from land to land * * * *
The kingdom of the world, &c.

Note 26.

"I know that my Redeemer liveth!" Hark!
The monumental marble bursts with song
The inscription in the open folio of the "Messiah," on the monument
in Westminster Abbey.

Note 27.

Hope's anthem swells * * * *
In allusion to the Handel Festivals first celebrated in the Abbey.

Note 28.

* * * With History's triumph strong.
By man came also, &c.

Note 29.

Caught up and echoed in a peal so vast.
Even so in Christ, &c.

Note 30.

God's angel with his trumpet's world-awakening blast.
The trumpet shall sound, &c. But thanks be to God, &c.

Note 31.

For some enduring pen, with heavenly art.

Job xix. 23, 24, 25.

Note 32.

Phantoms of ill * * * *

Job vii. 14.

Note 33.

* * * and Death his shade did rear.

Job xvi. 16, 22.

Note 34.

Sinking in ruin, shall become a shoal.

Westminster Abbey stands on ground that was formerly an island, called the Island of Thorns, from the thickets of thorn with which it abounded. Hence the supposition in the stanza.

Note 35.

Here let me sit and dream. It is the spot.

Poets' corner.

Note 36.

What marvel Spenser with those gifts of thine.

Edmund Spenser. Died 1598.

Note 37.

And when a patron to the chamber clomb.

Ben Jonson tells us that the Irish having robbed Spenser's goods and burnt his house and his little child, new-born, he and his wife escaped; and after, he died for lack of bread in King Street, Westminster, and refused 20 pieces sent to him by my Lord of Essex, adding, he was sorry he had no time to spend them.

Note 38.

* * * With thy goodly chief.

Geoffrey Chaucer. Died October 25th, 1400.

Note 39.

For ye are they who honour'd the leaf.

See the Moral Poem of the Flower and Leaf.

Note 40.

But where repose thy ashes, Bard sublime?

John Milton. Buried in Cripplegate Church.

Note 41.

Thine Beaumont, to Dramatic Genius dear.

Beaumont and Fletcher, two dramatists, whose friendship was as inseparable as their writings are undistinguishable. Fletcher was buried in Southwark.

Note 42.

Thine, Jonson * * * *

Ben Jonson. Died August 16, 1637.

Note 43.

* * Dryden * * * *

John Dryden. Died May 1, 1700.

Note 44.

* * Cowley * * * *

Abraham Cowley. Died August 3, 1667.

Note 45.

* * * * * Campbell. * *

Thomas Campbell, LL.D., died June 16, 1844.

Note 46.

His country church-yard, Gray's * * *

Thomas Gray, buried at Stoke Pogis.

Note 47.

The mountains theirs who loved to walk and dream.

Southey and Wordsworth buried in the Lake District.

Note 48.

O'er Fortune's harsh decree that yoked thy soul.

"O for my sake do you with Fortune chide
The guilty goddess of my harmful deeds,
That did not better for my life provide,
Than public means which public manners breeds.
Thence comes it that my name receives a brand,
And almost thence my nature is subdued
To what it works in like the dyer's hand,
Pity me, then, and wish I were renewed."
Shakespeare's Sonnets, cxi.

Note 49.

To the life-branding sports of vulgar mobs.

"Alas! 'tis true, I have gone here and there,
And made myself a motley to the view,
Gored mine own thoughts, sold cheap what is most dear."
Sonnet cx.

Note 50.

And place-made Nothings * * * *

"The oppressor's wrongs, the proud man's contumely,
The insolence of office and the spurns,
That patient merit of the unworthy takes."

Hamlet, Act iii., Scene 1.

Note 51.

Like a bright Lucifer's be plunged into
A slough.

Isaiah xiv. 12.

Note 52.

Or, like that star from Heaven which flew.

Rev. viii. 10, 11.

Note 53.

Upon the banks which Heaven ordained for life to all.

Ezekiel xlvii. 9.

Note 54.

And wearing on his brow a public brand.

Shakespeare's Sonnets, see Stanza 76.

Note 55.

And waft us from the world on wings of Ariel.

Rosalind, Juliet, &c.

Note 56.

Inspired, through the dead air that whispers "sin is death."

Romans vi. 23.

Note 57.

Beside the bank where the charmed waters creep.

The Avon.

Note 58.

Comes no rude dream to break thy well-earned rest.

".....! To die;—to sleep;—
To sleep! perchance to dream; ay, there's the rub:
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil
Must give us pause."

Hamlet, Act iii., Scene 1.

Note 59.

Breathing the sweets, thou loved'st, the wild thyme.

"I know a bank whereon the wild thyme grows."—*Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Note 60.

"Oxlips," "musk-roses," "violets," and the sweet-breath'd lime."

"An avenue of limes, the boughs of which are curiously-interlaced so as to form in summer an arched way of foliage leads up from the gate of the yard to the church porch."—*Washington Irving*.

CANTO THE FOURTH.

Note 1.

Gazing on thee from this thy earliest shrine.

The Shrine of Edward the Confessor.

Note 2.

* * * * * E'en on Cain

God's brand was mercy's seal. Even he lived not in vain.

"And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the land of Nod on the East of Eden. And Cain knew his wife; and she conceived and bare Enoch; and he builded a City, and called the name of the City, after the name of his Son, Enoch."—*Genesis* iv. 16, 17.

Note 3.

* * * * * Saxon England's birth.

The Tomb of Sebert, the Saxon King.

Note 4.

Saxon England's death.

The Tomb of Edward, the last of the Saxon Kings.

Note 5.

* * * * * the fate
Of Wales.

The Tomb of Edward I., the Conqueror of Wales.

Note 6.

* * * * * the fate
Of Scotland.

The Tomb of Edward III., the Conqueror of Scotland.

Note 7.

* * * * * the fate
of France.

The sword and shield carried before Edward III. in his triumphal processions in France. Also the relics of Agincourt, suspended over the shrine of Henry V.

Note 8.

* * * * * with all
The victories in Palestine.

The Tomb of Edward I. and Eleanor, and that of Edmund Crouchback.

Note 9.

* * * * * Yon gate
Reveals the Roses' bridal.

The gates of Henry VIIIth's chapel on which are wrought, with other devices, that of the double Rose of York and Lancaster.

Note 10.

* * * * * Chair of State
And stone—the vaster wedding—South and North
In one Great Britain.

At the coronation of James VI. of Scotland “the antique regal chair of Enthronization did confessedly receive, with the person of his Majesty, the full accomplishment of that prophetic prediction of his coming to the Crown which antiquity hath recorded to have been inscribed thereon.”—*Speed*, p. 886.

Note 11.

* * * * * Yon elaborate
And ponderous marbles summon India forth.

Monument to Admiral Watson, famous for his rescue of the British garrison in the black-hole at Calcutta.

Also a monument to Sir Eyre Coote, who expelled the French from the coast of Coromandel.

Note 12.

Till like a nine-fold shield * * * *

In allusion to the chapels grouped around the central chapel of Edward the Confessor.

Note 13.

And all thy Cross * * * *

The Abbey was the first Cruciform Church erected in England.

Note 14.

Speak Chatham * * * *

William Pitt, Earl of Chatham, buried June 9, 1788.

Note 15.

And thou brave Wolfe * * * *

General Wolfe, killed at the Battle of Quebec, Sept. 13, 1759, aged 38.

Note 16.

And you ye Captains. * * * *

Bayne, Blair and Lord Robert Manners, mortally wounded in the naval engagement of Admiral Rodney.

Note 17.

Through yonder monumental blazoned panes.

The stained glass windows that commemorate the Crimean War and the Indian Mutiny.

Note 18.

* * * * * Fierce Hammer of the Scot.

"Edvardus Primus Scotorum Malleus hic est 1308 Pactum Serva." Inscription on the Tomb of Edward I.

The dying King required of his son that his flesh should be boiled and his bones carried at the head of the English army till Scotland was subdued.

Note 19.

A band of Patriots gathered * * * *

The House of Commons—the mother and model of all Representative Assemblies—was first held in the Chapter-house of the Abbey.

Note 20.

* * * * * and came there
A reverend man.

"William Caxton, who first introduced into Britain the Art of Printing, exercised that Art A.D. 1477, or earlier, in the Abbey of Westminster."—"Epitaph designed originally for the walls of the Abbey, now erected by the Roxburgh Club near the grave in St. Margaret's Church."—*Dean Stanley's Memorials.*

CANTO THE FIFTH.

Note 1.

Thou shalt come with them slain by guiltless hands.
Sir John Franklin, lost in the Polar Expedition.

Note 2.

And thou that other martyr. * * *
Doctor Livingstone. Died May 1, 1873.

Note 3.

The bondsman's chain, Heaven bless that land.
"For 80 years his life was spent in an unwearied effort to evangelize the native races, to explore the undiscovered secrets, to abolish the de-

solating slave trade of Central Africa where with his last words he wrote, 'All I can add in my solitude is, May Heaven's rich blessing come down on every one, American, English, or Turk who will help to heal this open sore of the world.'—Inscription, with words of Dr. Livingstone inserted, on his Grave.

Note 4.

Who cometh to invade our ancient rest
Making the solid ground to crack and yawn?

James Watt's monument. When this colossal statue was introduced the floor gave way beneath its weight, and disclosed the coffins of the long-buried warriors in the vaults beneath.

Note 5.

Lady Augusta Stanley. Died March 1, 1876.

Note 6.

That made provision ere thou didst depart.

The Training College for Nurses, founded by Lady Augusta Stanley, 1874.

In Crown 8vo., Bound in Cloth, Price 6s.

AGNUS · DEI,

A POEM IN EIGHT BOOKS,

BY

WIMSETT BOULDING.

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

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There is about the poem considerable ability, no lack of thought, sometimes nobly expressed. The fearful struggle in the Garden of Gethsemane—the bitter agony, the terrible vision of sin, and the subtle temptation of Satan,—are all powerfully expressed. The trial scene, also, where Pilate knowingly, albeit unwillingly, condemns the innocent Prisoner, is very finely conceived, and the conflict between the good and evil in the Governor's mind is forcibly portrayed. The book is one which should bring its author fame amongst men who care for something better than the ephemeral productions of the hour.—*Derby Mercury*.

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